

2016: Our Year in Review



MANHATTAN
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

My first year at the Chamber has been a time of great reflection and renewal.

Our Board of Directors, led by Ken Biberaj, initiated a new strategic plan to guide the organization's future. We're transforming the way we operate to continuously improve our ability to help businesses thrive.

But we will always remain true to our core mission:

- We are a "super-connector" that facilitates strategic partnerships and business deals, provides access to government and increases the visibility of our members.
- We are a thought leader on the future of the city's economy and the collective voice for business on public policy and economic development decisions at all levels of government.
- We serve as a guardian of small businesses and startups who must navigate the costs and complexities of New York.

Our activities and accomplishments in 2016 -- which include convening several influential conversations, providing high-level networking opportunities, fighting for tax relief and going out to local communities to help business owners in their stores -- align with those goals.

In 2017 the Chamber will ramp up these efforts to help even more businesses succeed, notably by growing our membership, implementing new supports for entrepreneurs and startups, helping to open global supply chains and by playing a salient role in the upcoming citywide elections.

Stay tuned. We want you to be a part of it!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Walker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jessica" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Walker".

Jessica Walker
President & CEO

A TIME OF CHANGE

New Leadership

In February, the Chamber brought on Jessica Walker as its new President and CEO. Her background in government affairs aligns perfectly with Board Chairman Ken Biberaj's political bona fides – and is telling about where the Chamber is headed.



New Logo and Website



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THOUGHT LEADER ON NYC'S ECONOMY

Convening influential conversations

Led by Board Chairman Ken Biberaj, the Chamber held seven Chairman's Breakfasts which featured high-level conversations with US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, City Comptroller Scott Stringer, Senior White House Advisor Valerie Jarrett, basketball star Dwyane Wade, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security Sarah Morgenthau and US Congressman Hakeem Jeffries.



The Chamber's Board of Directors met with John Flanagan, Majority Leader of the State Senate, and Daniel Garodnick, a City Council member and Chair of the Economic Development Committee.

The Chamber hosted a speech by John Tsang Chun-wah, the current Financial Secretary of Hong Kong who is considered to be a top contender should he run for Chief Executive of Hong Kong next year.

The Chamber launched its new Government Relations Committee, which met with newly-elected US Congressman Adriano Espaillat.

Fighting for tax relief

The Chamber continued to lobby for relief from the city's onerous commercial rent tax, which only affects businesses in Manhattan. In May, the Chamber launched a new report on the issue and followed that up by co-authoring an opinion article in the NY Daily News titled, "The tax that's killing Manhattan businesses."

Major findings:

- In 2003, the city collected nearly \$388 million from 5,858 businesses. By 2015, 7,354 businesses were on the hook for the tax, paying \$720 million to the city. That's 86% more than in 2003.
- Unfortunately, many unprofitable businesses are paying the tax. The city's Department of Finance used aggregate data to compare taxpayers' net income in 2012 with their CRT tax liability in 2014. They found that approximately 1,200 businesses with very low profit margins in 2012 — less than \$100,000 each — earned a combined \$14 million in net income but together paid \$19 million in 2014 CRT tax.



Highlighting the skills gap

The Chamber hosted a provocative policy discussion at Baruch College about job trends and the skills gap in New York. Speakers included Daniel Culbertson of Indeed.com; Allison Armour-Garb of the Public Policy Institute of NYS; Chauncy Lennon of JPMorgan Chase; and Merrill Pond of the Partnership for New York City.

SUPER-CONNECTOR FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

Providing networking opportunities

The Chamber held more than 30 networking events, including a large Speed Networking Breakfast and an event at Yankee Stadium with the NYC Football Club.

The Chamber's Young Professionals and LGBT Networks also hosted several targeted networking events.



Facilitating business referrals

The Chamber's four Business Referral Groups met regularly throughout the year, generating more than 300 business referrals for one another in 2016.

Match-making with the Glasgow Chamber

In March, the Chamber entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in Scotland. We worked

throughout the year to identify potential matches between companies in both countries. Several of the companies identified visited New York in November for a day of meetings, which have led to substantive discussions about new partnerships, deals and opening of supply chains.



GUARDIAN OF SMALL BUSINESSES AND STARTUPS

Meeting businesses where they are

The Chamber launched a new initiative, "Chamber on the Go," in partnership with the city's Department of Small Business Services and with funding from the New York City Council. The initiative allows Chamber staff to meet business owners and retailers in their stores to evaluate their needs and direct them toward helpful resources. In 2016, the Chamber reached more than 300 businesses, mostly on the Lower East Side and the area south of Hudson Yards.


Sharing best practices for success

Led by the Chamber's Entrepreneurs and Marketing Networks, the Chamber delivered programming designed to help entrepreneurs and business owners grow their businesses. The daylong *Entrepreneurs Bootcamp* provided guidance on how to launch a successful business while *MarketingWeekNYC* offered tips for reaching customers in the new digital age.



Providing free loan comparisons

The Chamber formalized a partnership with Fundera, an online marketplace that connects small business owners with the capital they need to grow. Fundera will provide Chamber members with a suite of



services to help them discover and assess the credit options available to them online, including free credit score monitoring, repayment calculators and financing toolkits.

Protecting businesses affected by subway construction

The Chamber continued to advocate for businesses on the Upper East Side that were negatively affected by multiyear construction of the Second Avenue Subway. Construction is expected to end at the end of 2016. For the last six years the Chamber has tracked the 452 businesses in the construction zone and monitored store vacancies on an annual basis. Major findings:

- Since 2010, 48% (208) of all businesses in the zone remained in continuous operation.
- Nearly 15% (66) of stores were vacant as of August 2016, which according to the MTA is similar to the vacancy rates on nearby 1st and 3rd Avenues.

GIVING BACK

Funding nonprofits through street fairs

Since 1993 the Chamber has managed two of the oldest and largest street fairs in New York City. The 2nd Avenue Community Benefit Festival takes place each May between 66th and 86th Streets. The 3rd Avenue Community benefit Festival takes place each September, also between 66th and 86th Streets. We see these festivals as a “win-win” for the community for several reasons:

- It’s a day of fun for the thousands of visitors who stroll down the avenues.
- Entrepreneurial vendors have a low-cost platform to sell their wares.
- Our proceeds are donated to nonprofit organizations in the surrounding community. To date, the Manhattan Chamber has donated more than \$3.5 million to organizations seeking to improve the health, welfare, social and cultural lives of residents within Manhattan Community Board 8.



Recognizing the best in the business

On November 3, the Chamber held its annual “Best in the Business” Awards Breakfast which brings together 300 of New York City’s most influential business and civic leaders in order to recognize companies

and entrepreneurs for their “above and beyond” achievements, community contributions and milestones. New York Giants legend, Tiki Barber, was the Master of Ceremonies this year. Honorees included:

- Lifetime Achievement: Kathryn Wylde, Partnership for New York City
- Outstanding Corporate Citizen: Hank Williams, Platform (posthumously)
- Friend of Business: Maisha Walker, Message Medium
- Most Innovative: Uber
- Company to Watch: Infor



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