

L'EXCLUSIF

FCCQ member newsletter - 2009-2010 Annual Report

2009 Conference

More than 350 delegates gathered from October 2 to 4, 2009, in the Laurentian town of Saint-Sauveur to discuss ways of doing business in a new global environment that has been transformed by the emergence of new information technologies. Throughout an event-filled weekend, conference delegates took part in an array of workshops focusing on Web 2.0, market diversification and globalization, and export.

During the evening ceremony marking the end of conference, the FCCQ paid tribute to those individuals and chambers of commerce that distinguished themselves in the Québec network of chambers of commerce

Chamber of Commerce of the Year

Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Bécancour
From left to right: Richard Perron, Roch Dubé, Martine Pépin, Françoise Bertrand and Jean-François Giroux

Mercuriades Competition

The Mercuriades is the most prestigious competition recognizing the expertise of Québec companies. This year's edition took on a festive air in celebration of 30 years of excellence. More than 650 guests were on hand to applaud the success of the seven winning businesses during the gala evening held at the Palais des congrès de Montréal.

Lauréates « Businesses of the year »

SME - Labplas inc.



Large business - Bridgestone Canada inc.

Forums of influence

Over the past four years, these highly anticipated conference luncheons have been bringing together leading decision makers to discuss issues affecting the business community. The forums of influence are reserved exclusively for FCCQ members. These events encourage face-to-face discussions between participants. Four forums were held this year.

Day-to-day FCCQ

The FCCQ is headed by a board of directors composed of the major chambers of commerce and representatives from all sectors of the economy. It has a secretariat of some 20 people.

Our main publications

- 55** Press releases
- 26** Blogs and open letters
- 10** Briefs and studies
- 4** L'Exclusif newsletters
- 6** Web sites
- 1** Facebook page
- 1** Twitter message per day
- 26** FCCQeXpress newsletters
- 200+** CORUS-FCCQ radio spots
- 35** TV spots on Canal Argent
 - 2009 edition of the FCCQ indicator
 - Several documents and brochures for the 100th anniversary
 - Media campaign for Les Mercuriades

2009-2010 :

An active and formative year at the FCCQ

The Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec was especially active this year, as Québec began emerging from the economic crisis with some hesitation and the occasional bump.

Strengthening ties with our members

Following our convention in spring 2010, the FCCQ put in place the Forum des chambres, which led to significant improvements in chamber support services and better coordination of our joint action. The mechanisms to facilitate liaison between the FCCQ and the chambers were reviewed, additional resources were allocated to them, and all means of communication were strengthened and updated, both in terms of content and tools.

With the help of the chambers, the FCCQ also concluded several partnership agreements with the Québec government. Through these agreements, we conducted major tours, held dialogue and information sessions related to on-the-job training, provided training and informed members about many key issues, such as pay equity. We also designed a major member training project, a strategic tool to train all chamber staff and administrators that will be deployed in 2011.

We did the same for our corporate members, who are heads or managers of businesses in all economic activity sectors. In a desire to establish closer ties with our members, we carried out a year-end review of our organization and commercial development strategy.

Optimizing the Economic Vision

The FCCQ has wasted no time in building on the major axes of its Economic Vision and intensifying its actions to ensure that Québec reaps maximum benefit from its development potential. We have placed major importance on the main levers of our future prosperity: productivity, innovation, and labour force training. It is imperative that we strengthen these pillars of growth in the new economies to prepare for the future. And we need to do it now.

Mission

To promote free enterprise, which is inspired by initiative and creativity, in order to contribute to the collective wealth of Québec by coordinating the work effort of all its members.

Vision

To position the FCCQ as the key representative group for business interests in all socioeconomic and political forums in Québec.



Richard Payette FCA
Chairman

Françoise Bertrand
CEO

A responsible employer association

As the largest network of business people in Québec, the FCCQ is aware of its responsibility toward economic development. Its actions must contribute to economic development, facilitate decision-making by entrepreneurs and governments, which drive Québec forward on the road to prosperity, and develop entrepreneurship. The FCCQ's actions must also provide a credible counterweight to views and actions that lead to inaction.

The Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec takes positions that it considers to be moderate. In the same way as it vigorously denounces delays, bureaucratic red tape and inconsistencies, it also searches for solutions that, while not perfect, will help move us forward as an economy and as a society.

We are proud to be much more than a simple pressure group. We are economic development partners. Over the past few years, we have seen the government consult the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec almost systematically before taking initiatives that could be detrimental to businesses. This reflex action is a testament to the FCCQ's maturity and to the respect that we have all earned together.

Let's maintain our concerted effort

While the FCCQ is proud of the work it has accomplished over the past year, we are far from claiming "mission accomplished." When it comes to economic development, there are always improvements to be made. We need to be vigilant, maintain our concerted effort and support initiatives and projects that spring up in the minds of entrepreneurs and make them a reality.

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L'Exclusif is available at all times on the Federation's website at www.fccq.ca in the Publications section.

With its wide network of 154 chambers of commerce, the FCCQ represents more than 40,000 businesses and 100,000 business people involved in all sectors of the economy throughout Québec. The FCCQ strongly supports its members' interests in matters of public policy, thus promoting an innovative and competitive business environment.



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Significant public interventions

As part of its 2008–2012 strategic plan and in line with the major directions adopted in its Economic Vision: Building a Successful Québec, the FCCQ focused its actions on four areas: business productivity and growth, labour force development, globalization, and sustainable development.

FCCQ committees

With the active collaboration of the chambers of commerce and corporate members, the FCCQ spearheaded and coordinated the work of 17 working committees. These committees are a flexible and highly effective mechanism for liaison between FCCQ members. The working committees provide invaluable professional and sectorial expertise, advise the FCCQ on major socioeconomic issues, provide input on position statements and increase the effectiveness of its actions.

1) Business productivity and growth

Québec's relatively weak productivity explains in large part why the GDP per Québec resident is lower than the Canadian average. This is having an adverse effect on investment and profits for Québec companies. We therefore place special importance on innovation, which is essential to improving productivity and creating wealth. The FCCQ believes that direct aid should be provided, particularly to manufacturing and biopharmaceutical companies. We also believe that business should be at the core of innovation-related initiatives.

Some major issues

Exploitation of natural resources

Québec boasts vast energy and mineral resource wealth. The FCCQ has allied itself with its partners to capitalize on this wealth creation potential and argue in favour of conditions that will allow responsible exploitation of these resources for the benefit of all Quebecers. The FCCQ therefore travelled to certain regions together with the chambers of commerce to defend its point of view during events such as the public hearings on the environment held by BAPE.

No to a Canadian securities agency

The FCCQ has been actively involved in creating broad-based consensus in Québec against the federal government's proposal to create a single securities agency in Canada. Québec's financial sector, which currently holds a strategic position in our economy, would be inevitably weakened and its development severely affected should this initiative succeed. Entrepreneurs seeking capital, especially SMEs, would not receive the same services, and this could impact their perspectives for growth.

2) Labour force development

In Québec's current demographic context, characterized by imminent labour shortages in several economic sectors and regions, it is vital to make labour quality a high priority.

The FCCQ urged chambers of commerce and businesses to take action to encourage students to stay in school. It began a dialogue with businesses about labour shortages, looked for ways to make on-the-job training more accessible, opened a major file on professional and technical training in the regions, and advocated a better selection process for immigrants.

Some major issues

Education

In February 2010, together with the network of chambers, the FCCQ launched an initiative to keep students in school. This action was mainly aimed at urging businesses to limit the number of work hours offered to young people during the school year. Always a presence in matters of education, the FCCQ advocated better funding of universities, in particular by unfreezing tuition fees.

Business meetings on the shortage of qualified workers

During this tour, organized in partnership with MESS, a total of 16 seminars were held, including twelve this year. A report was tabled with the government. This series of meetings shed valuable light on the most relevant actions to be taken or continued in order to meet one of the greatest challenges facing the Québec economy in the coming years.

Decision-making bodies and committees

The FCCQ actively collaborates with the CSST, the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT), the Comité consultatif du travail et de la main-d'œuvre, and the Commission des normes du travail to defend the interests of businesses, prevent additional costs from being imposed on them and allow them to benefit from the many programs offered

Pay equity commission

In accordance with changes made to the Pay Equity Act, employers in Québec have until December 31, 2010, to complete an initial pay equity review and, if salary adjustments are determined, to pay these with interest retroactive to November 21, 2001. The FCCQ organized a tour by the Chair of the Commission de l'équité salariale in 2009–2010 in all regions of Québec.

Online training

The FCCQ designed a training program for Québec workers looking to develop their skills through a comprehensive and dynamic online training program. Two subjects are currently being offered (in French only): simplified supervision and workplace health and safety training. This affordably priced, user-friendly and rewarding training program is designed to improve worker productivity. For more information, go to www.fccqformation.ca

3) Globalization

In its Economic Vision, the FCCQ recognizes that globalization and market diversification are essential to business growth. On the strength of its convictions, the FCCQ has been working for several years to develop ongoing business relations with the United States, Europe and the rest of Canada.

Some major issues

Free trade

The FCCQ has been very active in reaffirming the importance of free trade between Canada and the United States and requesting that changes be made to the Buy American Act. Along with the United States Chamber of Commerce, the FCCQ has applied pressure to ensure that the Obama recovery plan does not harm business relations between our two countries. A meeting of the Québec-Ontario Continental Gateway and Trade Corridor took place in April 2009.

Major gatherings

The FCCQ took part in several major gatherings dealing with market expansion, in particular Northern Light, a trade forum and fair bringing together government and business representatives from Northern and Southern Canada, and Centrallia, a major networking event held in Winnipeg in October 2010.

Trade corridors

On the heels of the last Québec-New York Summit, the FCCQ held several activities aimed mainly at strengthening alliances with its American partners. Of particular note is the FCCQ's participation in two events organized by the Chamber Alliance of New York State (Albany) and the New England Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives in Connecticut.

4) Sustainable development

If there is a major issue for the future, it is sustainable development, and this is at the heart of our Economic Vision. We also believe that, while the foundations of sustainable development rest on respect for nature, its application does not imply that it be done at the cost of economic growth. Legislation related to residual waste, GHGs, sustainable development indicators and cultural heritage (Bill 82) took up much of the agenda in 2009.

Some major issues

Greenhouse gases

Appearing before the parliamentary committee, the FCCQ voiced its concern about additional efforts required of companies despite the fact that Québec is already the Canadian province with the lowest rate of emissions.

Mining activity

At the federal level, the FCCQ expressed its opposition to private bills C-300 (Act respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil or Gas in Developing Countries) and C-311 (Act to ensure that Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change).

Developing and diversifying our energy potential

The FCCQ considers that Québec's energy potential is an asset for economic development. While hydroelectric power remains at the core of our energy strategy, we recognize the importance of diversifying our portfolio. We intervened on several occasions to promote the development of wind power and to allow the safe transportation of hydrocarbons. In the future, we will be doing the same for shale gas.