

Grimsby Business Ambassador Program Launch Event

Championing Grimsby!



OVERVIEW

In 2025, the Town of Grimsby launched the **Grimsby Business Ambassador Program (GBAP)**, a volunteer-driven initiative aimed at strengthening the local economy by utilizing the expertise and connections of community leaders and business professionals within Grimsby. Leveraging the credibility of respected local leaders, GBAP promotes Grimsby's strengths through word-of-mouth, personal networks, and community engagement.

As a cost-effective alternative to traditional marketing, the program supports business retention, expansion, and attraction—driving local job creation, economic growth, and sustainable development.



PURPOSE & LAUNCH EVENT

On **June 5, 2025**, the Town hosted its first GBAP event, themed “**Championing Grimsby.**”

Designed as an intimate, story-driven event to foster pride and a sense of shared purpose, the gathering was emceed by the Town’s Economic Development Manager. It featured remarks from the Mayor, the Chair of Grimsby’s Economic Development Advisory Committee (GEDAC), select Ambassadors, the Town’s Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Town staff, and special guests. The format included a Q&A session, presentations, and networking opportunities.

The event was a meaningful success in fostering strong relationships, encouraging mutual learning, and creating space for authentic connection among participants. By bringing together diverse voices in an intimate and collaborative setting, attendees had the opportunity to better understand each other’s roles, strengths, and goals—laying the groundwork for a symbiotic relationship where everyone benefits and contributes to shared success. This environment not only strengthened collective support for the program but also helped cultivate internal ‘Champions’—natural brand ambassadors and influencers—who are now even more invested in promoting, supporting, and sustaining its long-term impact.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

1. Formally introduce Ambassadors to Town Council, CLT and key community leaders to foster meaningful relationships, enhance information sharing, and build trust among the program’s core ‘Champions’.
2. Communicate the program’s vision and key benefits to influential internal GPAG Champions to inspire engagement and drive alignment.
3. Align internal Champions with the Town’s economic priorities.
4. Spark collaboration and future initiatives.
5. Raise visibility through media and social outreach.



AUDIENCE REACH

More than **40 stakeholders** attended, including 7 (of the 10) Ambassadors, representatives from the MPP’s office, Niagara regional representatives, municipal Council, Members of GEDAC, Town Staff, along with local and regional NGOs partners. Broader awareness was generated through targeted media and social media engagement.

RESULTS & IMPACT

The event delivered strong results:

- **100%** of surveyed attendees rated it good or excellent; **75%** chose excellent
- **92%** gained a clear understanding of GBAP and the Town’s economic priorities
- All found networking valuable, with **67%** making 1–2 new connections, **25%** making 3–5, and **8%** making 6+
- Media coverage reached more than **150,000 people**, generating **471,000+ impressions**

EARLY OUTCOMES

Before the event	After the event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiore Vacca helped attract a 120,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility (85 new jobs) • Jim Hills led a \$15M reshoring investment from China (12 new jobs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breckon Husband began developing an international economic twinning initiative with Grimsby, UK • David Arkell partnered with the Town and Grimsby Power to organize a November 2025 Energy Summit (150+ expected participants) • Chris DiLillo expressed interest in expanding his trailer manufacturing premises by 45,000 sq. ft. with more than 50 new jobs

These initiatives reflect the program’s immediate momentum and long-term potential.

MARKETING TOOLS

To support the launch and ongoing outreach, the Town developed:

- **Event Program** – Providing a clear agenda.
- **Champion Grimsby Booklet** – Highlighting the program’s vision, benefits, and details; Council, GEDAC and CLT’s contact information, and Ambassador bios.
- **Why Grimsby Brochure** – Presenting key facts for Business Ambassadors to distribute and leverage when promoting Grimsby.

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

With a limited budget (\$5,000), the Town maximized impact through a curated guest list and volunteers. Coordinating the schedules of all Business Ambassadors proved challenging, as many are managing their own businesses, making it difficult to find a date that worked for everyone.

SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

GBAP is rooted in sustainable principles:

- **Place** – Leveraging local business owners as liaisons helps strengthen community pride and fosters stronger local relationships.
- **Processes** – Volunteer-led and resource-conscious, this program leverages ambassadors’ connections built through existing networks and communication channels.
- **Mentality** – The program promotes shared ownership and long-term resilience, with a focus on collective prosperity.

WHAT’S NEXT

Following a successful launch, GBAP is entering its next phase: activating the business community to champion regional economic development. The Business Ambassador Inaugural Gala will take place on September 25th to introduce the Ambassadors to the business community (150+ participants). Align internal Champions with the Town’s economic priorities.

