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The Regional Municipality of Durham

Report

To: Community Growth and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development
Report: #2025-EDT-5
Date: February 4, 2025

Subject:

Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week – Business Advisory Centre Durham

Recommendation:

That the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 This report highlights the activities and notable statistics from the Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week events. Do It In Durham was celebrated during Global Entrepreneurship Week (November 18th to 22nd, 2024) with a dynamic lineup of events designed to inspire, educate, and connect entrepreneurs across our region and beyond.

2. Background

2.1 Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week has been running annually since 2013 and is led by the Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD) in collaboration with over 10 sponsors, 20 local entrepreneur support organizations, and over 40 different speakers and presenters.

2.2 BACD is a Section within the Region of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Division.

- 2.3 Do It In Durham continues to be a catalyst for entrepreneurial growth and community building. This year's success reaffirms its importance as a platform to inspire innovation and foster economic resilience.
- 2.4 The name Do It In Durham was inspired by the thinking that the entrepreneurs support organizations, including BACD, wanted entrepreneurs and businesses to **start here, grow here and hire here**. They wanted them to Do It In Durham! Global Entrepreneurship Week takes place in November each year and was started by the Kauffman Foundation. It takes place in over 200 countries and there are over 40,000 activities globally during that week.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 There have been no previous reports or decisions on this topic.

4. Do It In Durham Week 2024

- 4.1 Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week was a dynamic celebration of innovation and business growth, featuring 62 engaging events across five days. The week brought together 1,226 attendees to participate in workshops, panels, and networking sessions led by industry experts and local leaders. Highlights included keynote addresses from renowned entrepreneurs, hands-on learning opportunities, and interactive showcases of local startups and innovations. With strong support from 11 sponsors and 50 community partners, the week's events highlighted Durham's vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem and its commitment to supporting local businesses, fostering connections and collaboration.
- 4.2 Metrics for all events during Do It In Durham week:
- a) Total Events: 62
 - b) Total Attendees: 1,226
 - c) Sponsors: 11
 - d) Community Partners: 50
- 4.3 Metrics for only those events organized by BACD during Do It In Durham week:
- a) Total Events: 31
 - b) Total attendees: 601

4.4 BACD attendees represented over 120 cities globally, including Winnipeg MB, locations across the Greater Toronto Area such as Scarborough and Brampton, and international locations including Port of Spain, Amsterdam, and Dubai. See Appendix A, Table 1 for the global distribution.

4.5 The breakdown of attendees from Durham Region is as follows:

- a) 225 from Oshawa
- b) 140 from Ajax
- c) 117 from Pickering
- d) 89 from Whitby
- e) 59 from Clarington
- f) 22 from North Durham

In 2025, a more concerted effort will be made to encourage organizations to host events and activities for entrepreneurs from the northern townships to attend. See Appendix A, Table 2 for the geographic distribution of regional attendees.

4.6 Distribution of all events:

- a) 26 events (41.94 per cent) were virtual.
- b) 35 events (56.45 per cent) were held in person, at locations such as Core 21, The Work Hub, Regional Headquarters, Bond St. Event Centre, OPG Offices in Courtice, 40 Temperance St in Bowmanville, Spark Centre, and Town Brewery.
- c) 1 event (1.61 per cent) was hybrid.

4.7 Event Highlights:

- a) The following sessions had the highest participation. See Appendix A, Table 3 for a list of events with the highest attendance.:
 - Kicking off Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week 2024: 99 attendees
 - How To Leverage AI To Create Killer Content That Converts: 70 attendees
 - Mastering Momentum: 6 Steps to Supercharge Your Sales: 68 attendees
 - How to grow your service-based business: 65 attendees
 - Social Media Trends for 2025: 59 attendees

b) The following three key impacts were achieved through the events and training sessions:

- Learning & Connection: Participants gained valuable skills in marketing, sales, financial planning, and technology.
- Global Engagement: Registrations from diverse locations showcased Durham Region as a hub for entrepreneurial innovation.
- Community Support: The week's events strengthened ties between local businesses and the broader community, encouraging support for small enterprises.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

Goal 3: Economic Prosperity: To build a strong and resilient economy that maximizes opportunities for business and employment growth, innovation and partnership.

- Item 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business
- Item 3.2 Leverage Durham's prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth

6. Conclusion

6.1 Do It In Durham Week was a great success, delivering valuable skills and knowledge to the Regional entrepreneurship community with the goal of assisting entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, create jobs, spark innovation, and strengthen the local economy. Do It In Durham will take place again this year, in November 2025.

6.2 Goals for the upcoming 2025 event include:

- a) Empower community-led leadership: BACD will take on the role of lead coordinator, focusing on guiding and supporting community organizations to host more events. This strategic shift empowers local organizations to take centre stage, fostering greater collaboration and expanding the diversity of programming while enabling BACD to focus on providing Do It In Durham event coordination and promotion of Entrepreneurship Week.

- b) Increase event reach and participation: BACD, as part of Invest Durham, will roll out targeted marketing campaigns through social media, email, and local press to target diverse audiences. Start the campaign in August.
- c) Showcase Durham's entrepreneurship ecosystem: BACD will support ecosystem partners and organizations to take the lead in showcasing Durham's innovation by supporting them in securing keynote speakers, building media partnerships, and hosting interactive showcases.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Commissioner of Community Growth and
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Tables

Table 1: Worldwide Event Registrations

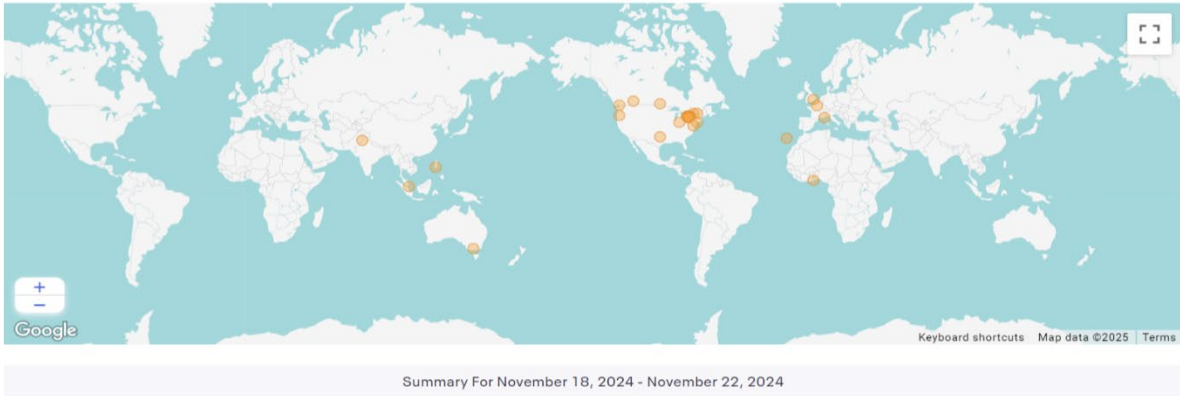


Table 2: Attendees across Durham Region Town's/Cities

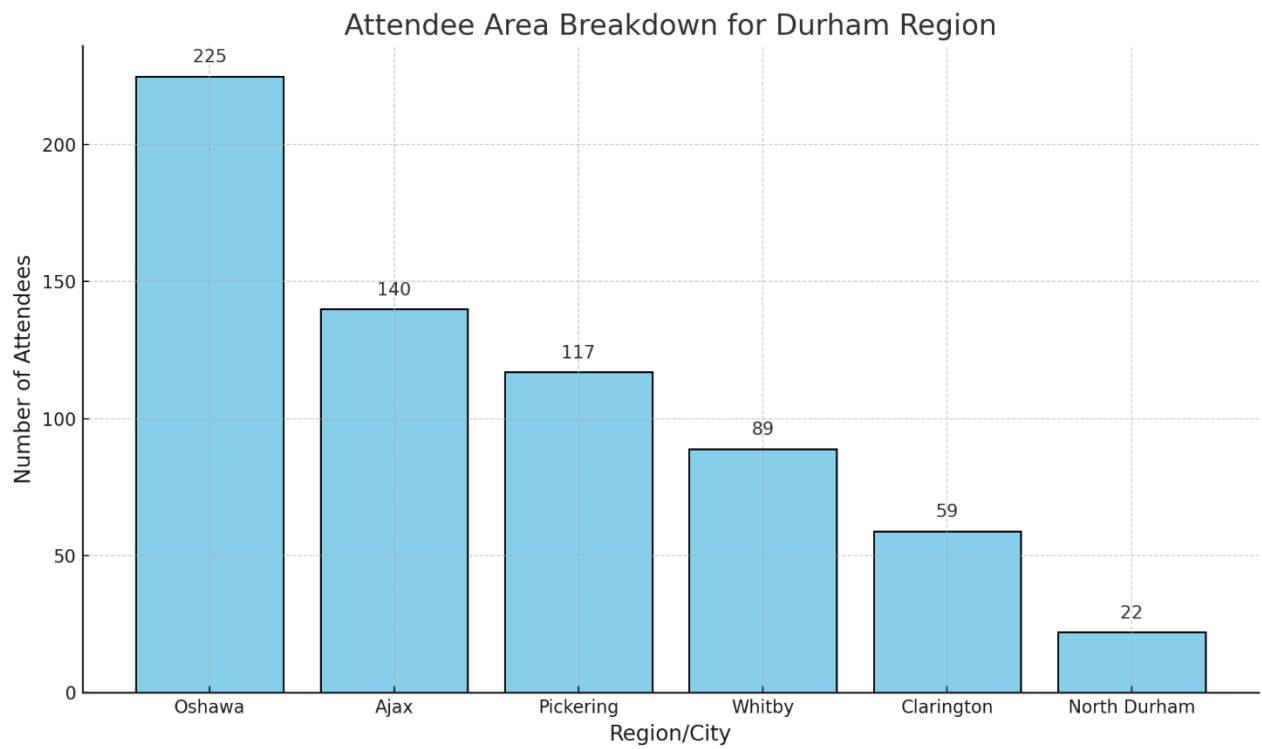


TABLE 3: Top 10 Events by Attendance

