



ASSOCIATION OF  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
EXECUTIVES

# HORIZON 2035

Horizon 2035 is designed to keep chamber leaders a step ahead by highlighting key future-facing influences. The influences below create both challenges and opportunities. There is no silver bullet. Smart chamber leaders must create targeted strategies based on their community's needs and social dynamics. Learn more at [www.acce.org/horizon](http://www.acce.org/horizon).

## LINCHPIN INFLUENCES

Linchpins hold things together. For over 400 years, chambers have helped hold their communities together - as conveners, connectors and trusted community leaders. And if you look inside the most effective chambers, you see these Linchpin Influences at work.



### CATALYTIC LEADERSHIP

How does a chamber provide catalytic leadership? When it defines its vision in terms of what it will BE rather than what it will DO. Chambers then view themselves as instigators of change, not merely as a resource to help manage it. Catalytic leaders take proactive steps to shape the future instead of simply responding to the actions of others.



### BELONGING AND GATHERING

The nature of belonging and gathering has transformed dramatically in recent years. Today communities exist both physically and virtually. Yet, many feel isolated and alone, especially as many of our community institutions no longer serve as gathering places. We can capitalize on the collective eagerness for reconnection, while also providing a blueprint for leveraging cross-sector partnerships to tackle big challenges.

## TIMELESS INFLUENCES

Some influences are timeless. The following will continue to be critical to chambers through 2035, just as they were to our forebearers over four hundred years ago.



### POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION

Polarization—creating “us-versus-them” division—is as old as time. While some people thrive on it, one of chambers’ enduring roles is to find common ground. Chamber leaders must adapt by strengthening their facilitation skills, fostering inclusive dialogue and promoting collaborative solutions to benefit the broader community.



### INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

As the population becomes increasingly diverse, creating an environment for economic opportunity for all will be essential for the future of our communities. Demographic shifts and labor force changes are causing chambers to think differently about the future of the businesses they serve and the workforce those companies will need.



### CHANGING BUSINESS MODELS

While membership dues remain important, successful chambers have mastered the art of balanced innovation - finding new revenue streams without compromising their core mission. Chambers are reassessing their value propositions to align and engage stakeholders around meaningful priorities.



### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The strategic adoption of new technologies and a commitment to innovation are essential for chambers to enhance their operations, improve member communication and broaden their range of services. Forward-thinking chambers can embrace artificial intelligence, data analytics and automation to increase efficiencies and innovate their programs.



### CHANGING EXPECTATIONS OF CHAMBERS

Chambers of commerce have proven their effectiveness as community changemakers. As a result, community members are now bringing new, oftentimes complex community issues to chambers, viewing them as trusted problem solvers. This shift requires chamber leaders to adapt and develop new leadership skills and approaches to meet elevated expectations.

# HORIZON 2035

## TIMELY INFLUENCES

As important as long-term influences are, there remain influences that require immediate and timely work to take advantage of an opportunity or mitigate possible adverse effects.



### CHAMBERS AS UNIFIERS

Chamber leaders have developed the skills needed to foster dialogue across divides and build consensus. Going beyond simply serving as conveners, they have become trusted sources of leadership on challenging issues. They lead efforts to bridge political fragmentation, promote policies that benefit the broader community and reinforce trust in business leadership.



### LEADERSHIP CHURN

Leadership churn, including the retirement and replacement of chamber CEOs, key staff volunteer business executives, and other community pillars poses significant challenges to chamber stability. The loss of seasoned leaders results in a gap in institutional knowledge and sometimes the loss of long-running chamber champions, necessitating the development of new leaders.



### TALENT DEVELOPMENT AT THE SPEED OF BUSINESS

Evolving employer and employee expectations, demographic and population shifts, technological advancements and other factors drive the need for rapid talent development, including adaptive training and industry-aligned skills. Chambers can help create new solutions to meet business demands.



### GLOBAL IMPACTS

Chambers can also serve as a conduit to support local businesses expanding their reach into new markets, encouraging international organizations to consider participation in their local economy and advocating for practical solutions to attract and retain international talent.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

### The process and people behind Horizon 2035.

Leveraging foresight tools, this initiative represents the work of nearly 1,000 ACCE members, partners and staff alongside the team at NEXT Generation Consulting. Thanks to all of you! Many thanks to ACCE's Horizon Investors, the Horizon 2035 Task Force and the ACCE team for their leadership. Each of you provided insightful support during the year-long process, the impact of which will be felt for years to come.

- [ACCE Horizon Investors](#)
- [ACCE Horizon 2035 Task Force](#)
- [ACCE Team](#)

- [ACCE Board](#)
- [Next Generation Consulting](#)