



SUBMISSION FOR 2018 DOWNTOWN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:  
Marketing and Communications:

**Raising BIA Awareness: #BIAweek Twitter Chat**

Submitted on behalf of *Toronto Financial District BIA, Bloordale Village BIA, Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas and the City of Toronto*

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**BACKGROUND** - Building on pre-existing plans

The Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) and the City of Toronto's BIA Office worked together to declare "BIA Week" in the City of Toronto for January 29 – February 2, 2018. The goal of the event was for Toronto BIAs to educate Councillors, City Staff and the public about what BIAs are and how they contribute to Toronto. This included information displays and decoration in the City Hall rotunda for the week and a reception hosted by TABIA with City Councillors and Staff on Thursday, February 1, 2018.

The #BIAweek hashtag was created by the Bloordale Village BIA and Toronto Financial District BIA to spread awareness of "BIA Week" online. A Twitter chat was also held for two hours in advance of the in-person reception at City Hall.

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT** - Organizing the Toronto BIA community

A social media strategy was developed by the Toronto Financial District BIA and the Bloordale BIA for #BIAweek to spread awareness of BIA Week and the accomplishments of BIAs in Toronto. The two BIAs also developed a 'How-to-guide' for the Twitter Chat which was distributed to other Toronto BIAs explaining how to participate. This ensured these BIAs knew how to participate in the chat which was crucial to its success.

The Toronto BIA community has a BIA Staff Group on Facebook with 55 members from 45 different BIAs. This makes it easy to collaborate and share ideas, as well as disseminate information to the Toronto BIA community. This staff group was crucial to distributing information about the #BIAweek social media strategy as it allowed for quick and efficient dissemination of information to all members.

**EXECUTION** - Utilizing BIA community resources in new ways

During the week, Toronto BIAs were encouraged to focus as much of their social media posting as possible on content related to "BIA Week" and use the hashtag in all social media postings. The goal was to create conversations and engagement about BIAs - interact with local businesses, community groups and other key stakeholders.

The Twitter chat was planned and curated by the Bloordale Village BIA and the Toronto Financial District BIA. Eight questions were posted by the chat host, @livebloordale, and respondents used the question numbers to respond. The questions encouraged BIAs to interact with one another and share the great things their own BIAs were doing throughout the city.



**OUTCOMES** - Strong interaction from key stakeholders and trending on Twitter in Toronto

#BIAweek was used throughout the week on social media, but the majority of hashtag traffic was during the Twitter Chat on Thursday, February 1. The #BIAweek hashtag was widely used by Toronto BIAs, Ontario BIAs, City Councillors and politicians, including:

- 432 accounts contributed
- 1,585 tweets
- 1,339,515 accounts reached
- 6,485,695 impressions

Key stakeholders involved in the conversation included:

- 12 Toronto City Councillors
- 2 Mayors
- 5 MPPs and MPs from across the Toronto region



*Trending topics on Twitter during the February 1 #BIAweek Twitter chat.*

<p><b>Innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Toronto BIA community has never had a trending hashtag on social media in the past.</li> <li>• Provided an opportunity for BIAs in Toronto and beyond to share ideas and help each other build a following on social media.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With 83 BIAs across Toronto, there are very limited opportunities to have so many work together, and this provides a template to do so.</li> <li>• Significant promotion of BIA achieved online with no requirement for printed materials – low carbon footprint.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for smaller BIAs with limited or no social presence to join in on a trending hashtag across the city.</li> <li>• Efforts were made by some of the BIA accounts to spread the word about smaller BIA initiatives (@BizDistricts, @MyTOFD have a combined following of 50K).</li> <li>• Involved BIAs from across the province and some in New York City were even engaged.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Replication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now that the BIA community in Toronto has an organized staff group on Facebook, including most personnel responsible for social media, it is possible for us to generate a trending hashtag whenever necessary to pursue joint goals.</li> <li>• BIA community already has plans to use the Twitter chat format to generate trending hashtags and build BIA awareness at future events, i.e. conferences and award nights when the community is already together.</li> </ul>