



MADE IN CANADA LEADERSHIP Book Highlights

THE MISSING LEADERS' CASE

In recent years, much noise has been made in the media and elsewhere about a leadership 'deficit'. Apparently, a lack of leadership quality and quantity prevail: supply simply cannot meet current and future demand. A leadership gap is indeed worrisome. More than any other factor, leadership affects the success or failure of an enterprise. Organizations and nations must have access to a steady pipeline of proficient leaders to achieve their goals and embrace the future with confidence.

Acknowledging the problem however, is only the first step. We must move beyond denouncing and despairing to solution-finding. This book is an attempt to propose viable alternatives for consideration. Therefore, our research aimed to answer three fundamental questions:

- **WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO DEVELOP COMPETENT LEADERS?**
- **HOW TO ENSURE CANADA HAS A RELIABLE SUPPLY OF CAPABLE LEADERS?**
 - **HOW TO STRENGTHEN CANADIAN LEADERSHIP?**

To do so, we sought the expertise, perspectives and advice of two important groups:

- 295 exceptional leaders from coast to coast in the following sectors: arts, business, community, cooperatives, public, and sports. These leaders shared what contributed to their own development and formulated recommendations to strategically develop leaders on a large scale.
- 66 leadership development professionals representing programs in community organizations, consulting firms, cooperatives, corporations, institutes, public sector institutions, universities, sports, and youth. These professionals described best practices and shared their thoughts on the optimal program architecture.

NEW PARADIGM REQUIRED

To ensure an abundant supply of capable leaders in all sectors of the economy, Canada must generate a critical mass of leaders. This means aligning leadership development efforts in a concerted, conscious and aligned manner. Current initiatives operate in relative isolation, lacking integration and focus across sectors and regions.

To achieve success will call for:

- Leveraging the development process: understanding and optimizing its inherent dynamics
- Putting in place extensive development infrastructures for children, youth and adults
- Designing and implementing national, organizational and individual leadership development strategies
- Setting up coordination mechanisms and entities to supervise efforts, facilitate information sharing and resource exchanges.

Solutions lie at a systemic and strategic level.

BEST WAYS TO DEVELOP COMPETENT LEADERS

Reaching leadership maturity takes years. The making of a leader is the result of a spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical quest starting with a *seed*, growing into a *plant* which *blossoms* and finally *pollinates*, leaving behind a legacy of 'descendants', so the cycle can begin anew. Each phase strengthens leaders' judgment as well as their capacity to serve. Through the journey, leaders surpass the limitations of current reality and transform themselves. Therefore leadership development is a major enterprise, not a casual undertaking. Sending someone on a two day training program simply won't do.

✳ Model

The most appropriate development model is the apprenticeship system because it combines theory, practice and coaching. It acknowledges that proficiency doesn't happen overnight but evolves progressively, from the inside out. It also recognizes the importance of the master-apprentice relationship, providing extensive exposure to role modeling and mentoring. Consequently, the best program configuration include: education, practice, opportunities for self-discovery, support and community

Education: to acquire frameworks, models, concepts etc...

Practice: to hone leadership skills through carefully selected and monitored applications

Self-Discovery: to understand one's identity as a leader and become aware of motivations and impact.

Support: to alleviate growing pains and sustain development with the help of mentoring, coaching, etc...

Community: to minimize the sense of isolation and provide opportunities for sharing, problem solving, networking etc...

ENSURING A RELIABLE LEADERSHIP SUPPLY

To effectively develop the critical mass of leaders required to ensure a reliable supply for the country demands a proactive and long term approach.

🌟 National Leadership Strategy

It starts by elaborating a national strategy to make leadership a priority, stress its contribution and the imperative to invest in this crucial resource. Interviewees recommended the following components:

- Practical leadership education at all levels, adapted to age groups. The goal is to produce well rounded, Canada savvy leaders, knowledgeable about international affairs; people aware of their civic responsibilities and willing to contribute.
- Widespread access to mentoring: Respondents selected mentoring as the most powerful leadership development method. Hence, if more individuals had access to mentoring, more leaders would emerge.
- National Leadership Institute: a governing body to devise coast to coast strategies and act as a catalyst for information sharing, education and resource development.

🌟 Organizational leadership strategy

Organizations can play a significant role by creating an environment that fosters leadership emergence, practice and development. It starts by making leadership visible and important, and setting up structures to facilitate the free flow of people and ideas required for effective leadership. A caring atmosphere conducive to learning is also important, for growth never happens without a few mishaps. Finally, providing a climate buzzing with possibilities and opportunities is prime. Like gardeners, organizations need to create conditions for the leadership seed to grow and mature; and this requires an attentive and solicitous eye.

🌟 Innovative Practices from the Co-op Sector

Co-operatives feature many innovative practices transferable to other sectors: from certification programs for officers, to student internships and extensive context education for employees. The most important takeaways however, are ideological, for instance: balance between social and economic mandates, concern for people first, and community stewardship. In many ways, co-ops represent the blended model currently sought after by the public and private sectors.

STRENGTHENING CANADIAN LEADERSHIP

🌟 National Leadership Brand

As the world gets smaller, more complex and interdependent, the importance of integrating various perspectives, achieving win-win solutions and collaborating with diverse people increases. In other words, in the global 21st century world, success will belong to the integrators, not the bullies. Canadians are uniquely positioned to succeed because of our inclusive style and process expertise. We excel at rallying diverse perspectives and creating common ground. Our collaborative, competent and modest approach is prized on the international scene

The core Canadian leadership style is coloured by regional, sector and individual filters. At the centre, stands a set of values which produce characteristics, attributes and behaviours. The characteristics form the cornerstones of our leadership brand: peace, principle, professionalism, possibility and diversity.

At the core of the brand is a set of values which combine to produce 5 cornerstones:

- **Principle**: an ethical and sound foundation for leadership practice; key word is integrity

- **Professionalism:** competence, know how, accountability ; key word is quality
- **Possibility:** can-do attitude and resilience to make it happen: key word is resourcefulness
- **Diversity:** ability to seek, respect and integrate various perspectives and work with different people; key word is inclusiveness
- **Peace:** collaboration, problem solving, conflict resolution and peace; key word is harmony

Our Brand is eminently suited for the global realities of the 21st century but to leverage it, we must assert our leadership identity in the context of our history, culture and strengths. This means outlining our leadership platform, becoming aware of our own style, and selecting a direction appropriate for both. A better understanding of ourselves will enable us to commit to leadership and select appropriate avenues suited to our skills, temperament and values.

Public Leadership Issues

It is impossible to strengthen Canadian Leadership without improving public leadership. In a democracy, citizens, politicians, civil servants and the media all have a part to play. The way they act and interact affects the quality of democratic life. Currently, roles lack clarity and focus, people need frameworks and skills to perform, and relationships are strained, particularly between politicians and the media. Therefore, interviewees suggested examining stakeholder roles and interdependencies and crafting a new blueprint.

CONCLUSION

We are fortunate to live in one of the best countries in the world. It is our collective responsibility to maintain and enhance this state of affairs. And to do so requires abundant and competent leadership. *“Leadership allowed me to make a difference. If a thousand individuals make a small difference, together they make a huge difference. Whatever advantages we have today, people fought for in the past. We also have to do our part.”* Johanna Bates-Van der Zeijst, President, Johanna M. Bates Literary Consultants.

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