



# Made in Canada Leadership

## Amal Henein & Françoise Morissette

Reviewed by **Nelly Kelders**, Member Services Director

It is not often that one comes across a book on leadership that is uniquely Canadian-focused. Amal Henein and Françoise Morissette are two experienced HR professionals who have combined their interest in leadership development with their passion for Canada. Leadership succession planning is of concern in all sectors of society today as the lack of leadership quality and quantity is lamented. It is a global issue but Henein and Morissette believe that we Canadians have the ability to create our own made-in-Canada solutions.

They aim to answer three fundamental questions in this book:

- How do we develop competent leaders?
- How can we ensure Canada has a reliable supply of capable leaders?
- How can we strengthen Canadian leadership?

Their research is based on the expertise, perspective and advice of 295 exceptional leaders from across Canada and 66 leadership development professionals from a broad field of experiences. Through these interviews, they have garnered a host of suggestions as to how Canada can strategically develop leaders on a large scale.

The Canada geese flying a V formation grace the cover of the book. This formation, according to the authors, is the new paradigm that should be considered, where each takes a turn at being the leader. We need a critical mass of leaders rather than relying on a hero to come along to save the day. If we are going to create a large body of leaders there needs to be intentional leadership development. Leadership cannot be taught in a few days or as a result of attending a conference.

In their research, Henein and Morissette found that the majority of leaders they spoke to regard the purpose of leadership as service. Not surprisingly, some leaders commented on the spiritual dimension to leadership. A servant leader is one who sets the vision and then allows followers to grow in their roles as they serve the organization. It is very much a philosophy of *we not me*.

How does one become a leader? According to their findings, the researchers found that leaders are either “accidental or innate.” Two-thirds of leaders describe themselves as being accidental leaders. They became leaders because either it was thrust upon them or they were coaxed into accepting the role. Most tend to be reluctant and resist before accepting. Their need for service is most often the catalyst that brings about acceptance to being a leader. The innate leader is the individual who has had a strong interest in leadership

from a young age. This person has a passion for leadership and seeks out opportunities to exercise leadership skills.

What is the best approach to developing leaders? The authors believe that the apprenticeship system is the most appropriate model to use because it combines theory, practice and coaching. This model allows leadership to develop gradually through the master-apprentice relationship, providing for role modeling and mentoring.

When looking at best practices in leadership, Henein and Morissette believe that Canadian co-operatives fit the bill. They describe many of the innovative practices of the cooperatives that could easily be transferred to other sectors. Co-ops are about win-win situations where the goal is to improve the quality of life, which means service to people and their communities.

In their section on a *National Leadership Strategy*, the authors do not offer a step-by-step strategy. Rather, they share the components for a strategy as suggested by the people they have interviewed. A *National Leadership Strategy* would:

- make leadership development a priority;
- stress the importance and value of capable leaders;
- reinforce the imperative to invest in this crucial resource; and
- emphasize the requirement for a strategic and long-term approach.

If we are going to implement the *National Leadership Strategy* then it only stands to reason that we need to be aware of our *Canadian Leadership Brand*. They have identified cornerstones of our leadership brand as peace, principle, professionalism, possibility and diversity. Former prime minister, Lester B. Pearson said that the 21st century would belong to Canada and it is these cornerstones that will position us to be global leaders.

Amal Henein and Françoise Morissette took three years to research and write this book. The result is a great resource full of personal contributions by accomplished leaders in business, the arts, the community, co-operatives, sports and the public sector. It lays the foundation for further discussion on how to achieve that critical mass of Canadian leaders. Each of us is called to examine and reflect upon our own leadership style and our organization's succession planning.

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