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Page WK3

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Uncovering need for a national leadership strategy

BOOK REPORT

The book: *Made in Canada Leadership: Wisdom from the Nation's Best and Brightest on Leadership Practice and Development* (John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.) \$39.99; 300 pp.

The authors: Amal Henein and Francoise Morissette

People like to complain about the shortage of good leaders, especially in politics. What this country needs, according to the authors of *Made in Canada Leadership*, is a national strategy for nurturing leadership potential. The book is the product of three years of research into how people become leaders and the challenges leadership presents, based on interviews with 295 Canadian leaders in the arts, government and volunteer organizations as well as business and academia. Two-thirds said they ended up leading by accident, often because they reluctantly took on a project no one else would touch. Unintentional leaders "move from surprise to acceptance" and grow into the role, the authors say. The other third described themselves as born leaders who knew early

on, sometimes as children, of their leadership aspirations. Whether it comes unexpectedly or by design, the seeds of leadership are planted in childhood, the authors say. Family responsibilities, school activities, sports and community programs all offer opportunities to test and develop leadership skills. Ideally, these opportunities would follow an apprenticeship model where children take on projects, often under the direction of a mentor. Leadership training should also be a formal field of study and academic research at the university level. One quibble is the attributed quotes and lengthy job titles littering the text distract from the ideas being presented — and they're ideas worth following. *Laura Ramsay, Financial Post*

