



CANADIAN COLLEGE OF
HEALTH LEADERS
COLLÈGE CANADIEN DES
LEADERS EN SANTÉ

Executive Summary

Leadership, Development, and Integration for Healthcare (and Beyond)

Exclusive Think Tank for HR/OD/PLD Professionals
and Leadership Researchers



Introduction

The Healthcare Leadership Context

In the evolving context of healthcare across Canada and beyond, top organizations recognize the importance of developing and supporting leaders, as well as of distributing leadership and integrating it system-wide. The latter can extend to the point where all staff are considered leaders and are expected to demonstrate leadership regularly.

The Evidence That it Works

Research suggests that developing and integrating leadership effectively enhances staff engagement, motivation, job satisfaction, retention, innovation, capacity, and performance at all levels. These benefits are particularly critical amidst the most severe health human resources (HR) crisis of our generation. Although budgets are strained, investing in evidence-based leadership development and integration is **essential** for achieving organizational strategic priorities and for maximizing leader and staff engagement, retention, and performance.

The Implementation Problem

Despite the evidence, many organizations struggle to identify **clear priorities** for leadership development and/or integration (whether in terms of the starting point or extending further), are unclear as to which **strategies** are most effective, and/or lack the **resources**, **internal expertise** or **capacity**, or **colleague support** to advance their plans.



The Community and Opportunity

The CCHL community of connected College members, partners, faculty, board members, and staff include many human resources (HR), organizational development (OD), and learning and professional development (L/PD) specialists and researchers. Their collective expertise and experience can provide insights into challenges, effective strategies, and reliable resources relevant to leadership development and integration.



Think Tanks

To unite and engage this community and to collect their perspectives, CCHL created a series of semi-annual Think Tanks on leadership development and integration, which are exclusive to HR/OD/LPD specialists and leadership researchers.

The Event

CCHL hosted the spring 2024 Think Tank installment on May 8th, which involved diverse specialists from across Canada.

Executive Summary



Think Tank Participants

96

registrants

64

attendees

Representing
21 organizations & 9 provinces

46

% HR/OD professionals

at the **executive** (20%),
director (22%), and
manager (27%) levels.

CCHL Think Tanks: Purpose and Event Details

What

The Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL) hosts semi-annual exclusive Think Tanks (TTs) for human resources (HR), organizational development (OD), and learning and leadership development (LD) professionals and researchers from across Canada and beyond.

Purpose

To identify *top priorities* and *strategies* for leadership development and integration, and to cultivate a *community* of HR/OD/LD specialists.

Think Tank Details

Hour-long virtual sessions involving a pre-survey, short presentation, breakout groups, and full group debriefs.

Think Tank Summary

To inform this summary, we conducted a *content* and *thematic* analysis of all responses.

People Priorities

40% managers
as #1 priority

21% frontline
mostly as 3rd priority

19% executives

19% directors

Results: Leader and Leadership Development

Focus (capabilities/topics) priorities:

(by level of leadership)

- Managers: **fundamentals** (29%), **Lead Self** (28%), **communication** (24%);
- Frontline: **communication** (39%), **Lead Self** (32%), **leading others** (29%);
- Executives: **governance** (26%), **communication** (26%), **strategy** (21%); and
- Directors: **communication** (24%), **Lead Self** (24%), **developing others** (22%).

Overall priority focus: 1) Communication, 2) Lead Self, and 3) leading others (getting [things] done).

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The **scope** of focus increases from 1:1 communication & project management initially, to a strategic, innovation, and systems lens for executives. **Developing others** was highlighted only for directors. Digital literacy, artificial intelligence (AI), and environmental sustainability were absent, surprisingly.

Development activities (most effective):

Types of activities: **relational** (57%), **educational** (34%), **experiential** (5% = low).

Progressive shifts: from workshops & mentoring (**frontline/manager**) to coaching (**executives**).

Program formats:

- Overall: **in-person** (44%), **blended** (35%), **virtual** (20%).
- **Virtual** highest for **managers** (40%), lowest for **executives** (9%).
- **Length:** hour-long and longer preferred to enable application.

Change in priorities since 6 months ago?

- ◆ More than half = “same priorities”/**no change**

Top Development Activities Overall

33% coaching

32% workshops

16% mentoring
especially *integrated*.

Results:

Leadership Integration

Priorities: embed leadership in **talent optimization (TO)** (44%), **leadership development** programs (33%), only 11% said embed in organizational culture.

Challenges: competing/misaligned priorities, time, turnover, limited resources & span of control.

Strategies: four respondents answered, “I don’t know” = a **need** for **guidance**.

1. Create an overall **integration** (of **leadership into TO**) **strategy**, True North-aligned (16%)
2. Earn **executive support** and secure a **budget** (9%)
3. Provide **leadership development** for all people (9%)
4. Increase **decision-making autonomy** for all people (9%).

Top Integration Priorities

44% talent optimization (OT)

33% leadership development

Implications for Practice

Development: prioritize “who” (EDIA), *then* customize the “what” & “how”, using **integrated approaches**.

Integration: **embed leadership** in **Talent Optimization**, **strategically**, with **executive** support.

Overall: **network** with colleagues for connection, **community**, guidance, **resources**, and support.



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Connecting with CCHL

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This executive summary was prepared by Dr. Jaason Geerts, Vice-President of Research and Leadership Development, Canadian College of Health Leaders, in November 2024. Graphic design for this summary was provided by Lynne Marleau, Project Manager, Professional and Leadership Development Programs. The College would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the community members who generously shared their expertise and perspectives, shaping this report into a valuable resource.

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