



TEAM #3

TEACH. LEAD. INSPIRE.



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Introduction

Team Three travelled to Halifax, Nova Scotia and Trinidad and Tobago. The group visited 10 sites and met with 15 organizations and individuals in Nova Scotia prior to visiting 13 sites in Trinidad and Tobago. Common themes connected to leadership and the successful implementation of the CCELD discussion imperatives were demonstrated at several site visits. During the study tour, we had invigorating dialogue, bringing the inter-connectivity of the various discussion imperatives into focus while building invaluable relationships amongst ourselves. The common threads included collaborative leadership, importance of cultural diversity, ethics and good governance, the impact of information technology and innovation. The following key messages were identified by the team in relation to the discussion imperatives.

Inclusiveness, Diversity and Civic Engagement and Participation

In order for organizations to thrive their mandates must be far-reaching, encompass community initiatives, build truly diverse workplaces and practice inclusive modes of operation. Organizations must also embrace corporate social responsibility that is accompanied by a strong sense of emotional and cultural intelligence as an integral part of corporate culture and viability.

On reflection, two main organizations demonstrated inclusiveness, diversity, civic engagement and participation. Hope Blooms, a youth-led initiative in Nova Scotia that runs a greenhouse where children grow vegetables and produce and sell salad dressing, has used community empowerment and development as core principles to reduce poverty and encourage youth entrepreneurship. As such, they have employed social enterprise and partnerships to drive their civic and social engagement objectives. Similarly, Millbrook, a First Nations community in Nova Scotia, which has experienced considerable socio-economic exclusion has been able to reduce the impact of its exclusion. Through strong leadership, the community has attained self-governance, leading to the cohesion of the community and financial stability incorporating varied business initiatives aimed at providing employment. This particular community continues to find wealth creation mechanisms to respond to the needs of its people. However, there is the glaring need for gender equity as the contribution of women is minimal or absent, especially within the community's decision making body – the band council.

Globalize and Localize

Today's leaders must balance the interests of their local communities and the globalized work environment. Over the course of our study dialogue we found recurring themes amongst leaders and organizational culture and the key points we wish to highlight are:

The globalized impact of social media has changed the way that companies and organizations interact with their stakeholders and customers. In industries such as banking and aviation, for example, customers require and utilize online and mobile services. Simultaneously, they can leverage social media to voice satisfaction or dissatisfaction with products and services. The instant and wide-reaching impact of this technology requires leaders to consider these factors and implement changes to keep pace. Globalization also adds to the competitive business environment and companies are required to implement an appropriate strategy.

When companies and organizations transform from the local to global domain the relationships with stakeholders, employees and customers must be grounded in good corporate responsibility. The leader must ensure that with the various locations in which they operate there is an understanding of the local culture and that appropriate partnerships are established. The identity of the organization must be clearly understood by the team in order to pursue the vision and execute the mission. One example is Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI), which was focused on identifying how Nova Scotian businesses fit into the global community and linking them with the relevant partners and countries abroad. Essentially, NSBI was focused on building partnerships for the purpose of developing strong connections that go beyond the project funding. Another example is Dalhousie University which has connected with international organizations to build on previous projects with long standing partners and start new educational programs.

The site visits in Halifax and Trinidad and Tobago taught us that a leader must develop empathy and emotional intelligence to relate to people from other cultures and lead internal, local and global stakeholders.

Ethics and Good Governance

Ethics and good governance are instrumental to the success of organizations across all sectors. Leaders in any organization must embody the values they wish their company to represent in order for employees to follow suit.

In Trinidad, the Group visited with ScotiaBank. Scotia Bank provided us with a clear demonstration of ethics and corporate governance. Scotiabank demonstrated that successful leaders create an atmosphere where high ethical standards are the norm and the expectation and those standards are enforced by senior leadership in a culture of accountability. The labour unions with which we engaged such as the OWTU, CUPE, NSFL and CLC were undoubtedly passionate about the issues they represent. Their organizational structures and governance practices of transparency, accountability and communication provided their membership with confidence that their leadership was acting in their best interests.

Integrating Technology: Thriving in a Connected World

In an increasingly networked world, technology has become the primary means by which organizations add meaning to their brands, build stakeholder partnerships and improve customer experiences. The common narratives regarding the use and integration of technology within business models across the public and private sectors and civic society are as follows:

Our findings show that across all sectors there was a direct correlation between how technology was employed and the efficiency of collaborative efforts. In both the Caribbean and Canada the public sector and civic society tended not to have a high integration of technology. At best, there was evidence of the use of social media to assist with the client experience but our presenters generally did not demonstrate a real investment in technology to improve inter-organizational communication or operational efficiency. However, some organizations, e.g. the Drug Court in Trinidad and Tobago, were aware that the lack of technology integration negatively affected efficiency, collaboration and information sharing. Conversely, the private sector typically used technology to improve its competitive offering, form more effective alliances, improve inter-organization communication and enhance organizational culture.

A correlation was also seen between organizations that compete globally and work with international partners and have a proclivity to use technology to improve operational efficiency and meet industry compliance standards. These organizations appear to be better poised for local market growth and expansion throughout the region. According to Mr. David Jardim, CEO of Massy Motors, investing in a shared IT platform to accompany the rebranding of the Massy Group of companies enabled it to consolidate 60 companies across the Caribbean basin. Moreover they were able to standardize business practices and improve the customer experience through several company-wide loyalty programs.

Lastly, there was an excellent illustration of how technology was used to build cultural intelligence as demonstrated by Hope Blooms, a youth farm-to-table non-profit organization in Nova Scotia, Canada. Hope Blooms uses greenhouse technology to grow and maintain vegetables which are transformed into retail products such as salad and salad dressing. Its workers use photography and video to produce product labels and to create content for social media. This creates a cultural identity for the organization by showcasing its diverse membership base, social consciousness and ethical business practices.

It is evident is that leaders must champion technology within the organization in order to gain stakeholder buy in and secure resources for investment. Overall we noted that technology impacts areas such as collaboration, sustainable growth, operational efficiency and cultural intelligence and the use of technology is a common catalyst for change.

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leaders motivate teams to work toward a shared goal. Virtually every organization visited provided examples of collaborative leadership in action and identified two consistent themes.

Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders is important. This was demonstrated by the unions in Nova Scotia which joined together to respond to the government's austerity measures. In spite of their differences, they recognized a common interest on this issue and worked together by holding joint rallies and taking a unified position in the process of joint bargaining for the renewal of the public service collective agreements. These leaders were able to build a consensus around a common goal, producing a result was greater than what they could have achieved individually.

When seeking to innovate or implement change, a good leader is willing to work with key stakeholders to obtain their support and input. Regardless of how positive or profitable a particular idea may be, without the support and resources of others the transformation will be less effective. The most prominent example of this was the Massy Group in Trinidad. In 2011 Massy began a three-year project to rebrand its 60 companies into one company with a single identifiable brand. They were able to achieve this through an incremental approach which started with engaging senior management and then employees in the process to draft the company's new mission statement and values. As a result of this collaboration, employees across the organization were supportive of the change and became champions for the collective Massy Group brand.

Overall we concluded that collaborative leaders recognize the importance of working with others to implement and achieve their organization's goals. They are skilled at connecting people, ideas and resources to facilitate positive outcomes. They demonstrate collaborative leadership by engaging key stakeholders in meaningful participation through identifying common interests and working with them to achieve common goals. As a result, they are able to expand their organization's reach and ability to achieve outcomes that benefit society as a whole.

Embracing Failure

We met leaders learning from failure, adapting to change, and managing risk. Jazz Aviation faced profound transformation in the industry and, as a result of failed attempts to diversify, learned that it needed concentrate on its core relationship with Air Canada. Operational failures including massive data loss led to the introduction of a backup data system and secondary operation center used primarily during harsh weather and maintenance periods to avoid any down time in the 24 hour operation. As a result, the airline has been able to institute proactive measures to mitigate known risks and vulnerabilities.

The Millbrook First Nation, faced with historic disadvantages, has been able to strategically position itself in the economy through varied wealth creation mechanism and sought expertise from outside of the community to represent their interest at the negotiating table and to realize their economic growth and development strategy. Similarly, the Massy Group was failing to capture the full value of their diverse and geographically disbursed business holdings. A rebranding strategy strengthened collaboration and strategic development across the group and unlocked greater value for shareholders. The group mitigated the risk of failure in the transition phase by securing the buy-in of senior management and all staff from the onset as well as used the expertise of a neutral, external group to navigate the organization through all the change processes.

The San Fernando Drug Treatment Court in Trinidad introduced a rehabilitative program among non-violent offenders who are battling drug addiction. This initiative which is a voluntary option for offenders, provides a necessary alternative to incarceration by providing those selected with a second chance through treatment, along with transitional support as a means to avoid recidivism. This initiative has had it successes and as well as failures. Through personal sabotage close to their graduation presumably based on their inability to cope outside the controlled prison environment has caused some participants to have to re-enter the prison system.

Recommendations

Leading through innovation and transformation requires vision, skills, resources and support from key stakeholders. Our key recommendations for any leader that wants to innovate and transform are as follows:

- Engage outside consultants to conduct assessments of policies and programs to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to develop strategic plans
- Develop initiatives to provide an understanding of diversity utilizing information, communication and technology which should be embraced and presented in a holistic and culturally intelligent manner to narrow gaps and create an inclusive society
- Create a social identity to be defined and adopted by all stakeholders to afford engagement, equitable growth, viability and profitability across all sectors and in the interest of national growth and development
- Invest in an automated information technology platform to ensure information sharing between different stakeholders and to facilitate cross-industry collaboration
- Develop leadership that understands the benefits of integrating technology into the business model and collaborate with employees to develop the policies and procedures for implementation
- Invest in training the workforce so that they are comfortable with using technology, reducing the aversion to integrating it in workplace operations
- Expand the practice of international and inter regional exchanges to explore business opportunities and understand best practices involving the use of technology in established and emerging industries
- Develop initiatives for public private partnership investment into technology infrastructure to lessen the digital divide.
- Cultivate intelligent risk-taking to foster innovation and build awareness not only of the risks of acting but also the risks of not acting in a dynamic environment.
- Keep a well-tuned moral compass and be true to your values. Communicate the importance of ownership and accountability and model this in your personal behavior.

Team Insights/Lessons Learnt

Our study tour has provided invaluable insights into a range of leadership styles and what it means to lead through innovation and transformation. Our experience has inspired us all to be better leaders. The key insights/lessons learnt that we intend to apply in our own organizations are:

- Leaders must engineer a space for creativity as it will not happen if it is not encouraged
- Leaders must be willing to take risks and embrace failure
- Leaders must seek to build cultural and emotional intelligence when entering into new business relationships
- Transformative leaders will utilize technology, resources and relationships to increase the effectiveness of their organization

The last two weeks have transformed our thinking and exposed us to global and local issues. We are committed living out the lessons learned and sharing our wisdom with other future leaders to create a better world.