

Insight Council

Suzanne Boss & Carber Goodlet

Training tomorrow's Leaders

"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic."

The Insight Council is a new business-training centre that launched in Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Toronto in September of 2009. Founded by Carber Goodlet (President), Suzanne Boss (VP) and Henry Kutarn (chairman), the Insight Council is helping today's business leaders to adapt to tomorrow's business. Business is changing at an ever-increasing pace and yesterday's logic will not solve tomorrow's problems. CEO's and business leaders have to deal with never-before-seen issues, like they have already dealt with them everyday. To maintain innovation and competitiveness, there are no guidebooks to read; there are no previous examples to follow; there is only good judgment, quick thinking and insight.

Today's leaders have more demands on them than ever before. The Insight Council believes the definition of a leader itself is changing. In the information age a good leader no longer needs to know all the answers but *must be able to ask the right questions*.

So how do these new leaders cope? Can they predict the future? Of course not, but they do possess, what the Insight Council refers to as *adaptive capacity*, which, fortunately, is a skill that can be learned and developed- with the help of the Insight Council, of course. **Adaptive Capacity** is the ability of an individual to adapt to changing situations and to realize today's decisions must consider tomorrow's consequences. It means making decisions that have never been made before, without being told what to do. It means leading with wisdom; creating resilience and sustainability in economic, social and environmental terms.

By making long term decisions, considering tomorrow's consequences and ensuring resilience, these leaders are defining sustainability. So, why not "sustainable capacity"? The Insight Council ran into a problem with the word *sustainable*, one that we have seen at Make it Good (MiG) all too often. Suzanne and Carber found that, "When you say sustainable, people immediately equate that with "green" and then dismiss the concept. Doors were closing before they even opened." So here's the lesson: sustainable DOES NOT JUST MEAN GREEN. Naturally it considers the environment, but it also considers the financial and social aspects of business, or simply, the people, the profits and the planet.

In order to expand one's adaptive capacity and that of their business, the Insight Council

is training CEOs and business leaders through two major methods: peer-advisory groups and leadership coaching.

Peer Advisory Groups

Peer-advisory groups bring together CEO's and leaders from non-competing companies. These groups of 12 meet on a monthly basis to collaborate in order to find innovative solutions to unusual problems. An experienced chairperson leads each meeting. In Calgary, there are currently three chairmen: Wayne Boss, Don MacInnis and Pat Lipovski, who between the three of them, have 81 years experience in consulting, coaching and business development. The chairs act as mediators, spectators or directors of the conversation. Their job will be to identify problems that are common to the group, or individual/recurring problems that need to be dealt with on a one-on-one basis. Their mantra is to deal with the underlying problems, *not* the resultant symptoms.

This portion of the Insight Council is highly analogous to Make it Good. Bringing together committed and passionate individuals to collaborate and create results that are greater than the sum of their parts. Innovative solutions to novel problems are created through a group effort. The members of each group will stay consistent; allowing a relationship to form and hopefully the depth of issues that are dealt with will increase.

Among others, the following are listed as benefits of membership with the Insight Council:

- Allow members to engage with and learn from their peers
- Provide a forum to discuss the "un-discussable"
- Identify and validate member's highest priorities
- Enhance self-awareness and gain new perspectives
- Expand networks
- Provide a safe environment to test ideas and receive feedback from experienced peers who represent a diverse range of industries

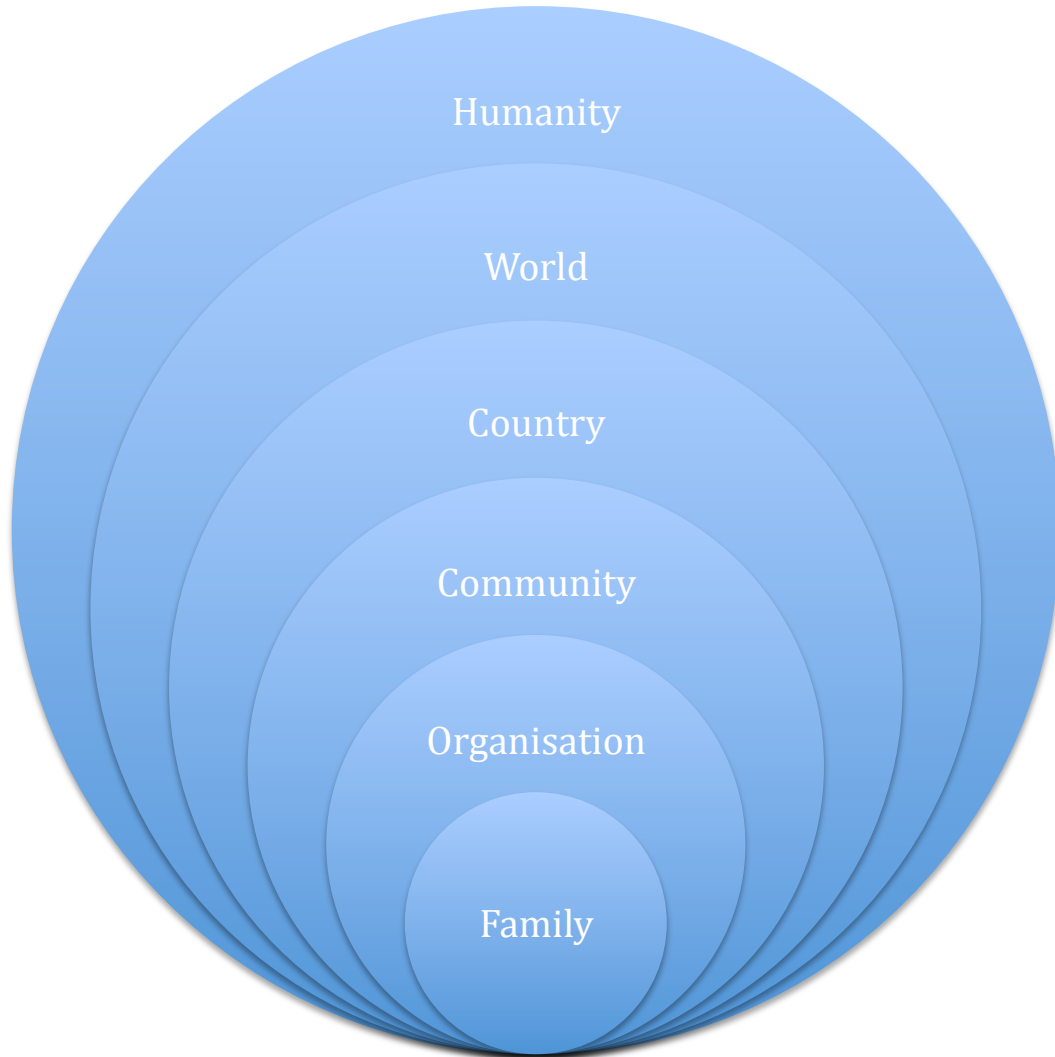
Leadership Coaching

The second component that the Insight Council uses to develop leaders is one-on-one coaching sessions. Leaders with high adaptive capacity are the most suited to dealing with the ever-changing circumstances that frame today's business. They are the ones that will dramatically increase sustainability (in the fullest sense of the word), not by focusing on sustainability itself, but by adapting to new issues and by making decisions based on the very long term. Suzanne and Carber have identified six characteristics of these leaders: collaborative, compassionate, curious, courageous, creative and disciplined.

Leadership coaching is a once-a-month, one-on-one meeting in which serious, recurring or private business issues are dealt with. CEOs are again paired with an experienced leader that helps them to master new tactics in order to deal with today's business issues. These sessions are the platform on which adaptive capacity is truly developed.

In order to get CEOs thinking long-term the Insight Council has added a whole new level to organizational planning. In early business courses, students learn about operational, tactical, and strategic planning which look 6 months, 3 years and 5 years into the future respectively. The new level that the Insight Council has added: foresight, planning a *generation* into the future!

Not only is the length of time a planning consideration, but the breadth of awareness is also a major consideration. When thinking 25 years into the future, CEOs and leaders have an increasing scale of awareness that should be considered. When a person is considering only him/herself, they are at the lowest level of awareness, as they become more aware of circumstances and consequences, they move further outward:



As a result of thinking about humanity as a whole, 25 years into the future, planning naturally becomes more sustainable. The coaching sessions won't teach the leaders what to think, but *how* to think. In Carber's own words, the Insight Council is creating the conditions in which sustainability can develop and helping organizations to continually change, because, "If you don't like change, you'll like irrelevance even less."