



Photo by Mike Douglas

Leadership 2.0

The future of leadership lies in finding the leadership within individuals.

Words by Chris Carriere

The Mississauga of 2012 faces a transitional period that will determine whether or not it becomes a world city. It has industry, it has an affluent and educated population and it has a brain trust in the form of highly-regarded academic centres. But we're also well aware of its deficiencies—widespread congestion, a transit system heaving under the weight of demand, the sustainability conundrum posed by a city built largely without the sort of mixed-use development that makes for walkable communities, balkanized boroughs that sometimes fail to reconcile competing interests, and an arts-and-culture framework that simply doesn't meet the standards of a world city.

Of course, you can't talk about a transitional period without mentioning the obvious: this is Hazel McCallion's last term. The spirited matriarch who has spent 34 years bringing Mississauga from diminutive township to flourishing urban centre, building an international reputation and an unprecedented cache of goodwill and political clout is about to retire.

"Mississauga is quite different from the city it was," McCallion says. "[In the beginning], we were faced with an unlimited amount of development; that's not the case anymore. The decisions we're making now revolve around finding the most efficient way of doing things."

She points out, by way of example, the provincial government's recent ruling with regard to secondary units, which will result in new stress on service delivery systems that the designers of this city could never have anticipated.

What kind of leaders will Mississauga need to overcome its next set of hurdles?

We spoke with Mayor McCallion; Michelle DiEmanuele, President and CEO of Trillium Health Partners; James Boyd, coach and general manager of the newly-minted Mississauga Steelheads; Dr. Colin Saldanha, a local physician, former Chair of the United Way of Peel, the Peel Police Services Board, and the Mississauga Board of Trade; Dr. Ulli Krull of the University of Toronto

Mississauga, whose work with the Masters of Biotechnology program may just be a roadmap to future innovation; and Diane Saldanha, a graduate of Krull's MBIotech program and a young community leader in her own right who, at the age of 26, has chaired the Young Leaders Council for the United Way of Peel and has been involved with the Alzheimer's Society, Credit Valley Hospital Foundation and Free the Children.

Their verdict? The world has become more open, and leaders have had to adapt their style to it. The challenge now is to cultivate leadership at every level of an organization.

The Healthy Organization

"Great leaders create great work environments and great work; I think that's why I've never really chosen a job, so much as I've chosen leaders to work for," says Michelle DiEmanuele, whose career has spanned both the public and private sectors.

It's one of the most common sentiments in the literature of leadership: the virtue of a leader can be measured by the health of the organization. But in a globalized and intensely dynamic world of limited resources, rapidly shifting technology and rapidly expanding populations, what does a healthy organization look like?

Private or public, small business or community board—the winning organizations of the 21st century appear to be the agile ones, those that are flexible and adaptable enough to mould their approach to an ever-shifting landscape. DiEmanuele points out that "Mississauga is such a fast-growing community—[we are forced to] deliver public services to a growing population despite limited resources. We're compelled to innovate every single day. Look at the financial support we get from the other levels of government versus what we need to spend; we need to be better, smarter and faster than anybody else in the province."

The modern flatter organizational structure discourages micromanagement and affords employees enough autonomy to pursue their own projects, in addition

to broader company goals. Its open culture encourages collaboration between different departments—breaking down so-called siloing, wherein the components of a system operate without an understanding of one another. The truly dynamic organization is one in which ideas flow from both the bottom up and the top down.

This is the corporate world that students of Dr. Krull's Master of Biotechnology program are being prepared for. Here, students are arranged into teams composed of people with different specialities and left to independently solve complex problems, with "budgets" to buy resources and rent equipment. The program is a first step towards a broader initiative, the Institute for Management and Innovation, where programs will be even more collaborative, bringing together students from different disciplines into courses organized by *sector*, rather than subject.

Small groups of versatile workers, capable of working without close supervision—this is the outcome of a population that is becoming, according to Krull, Colin Saldanha and Hazel McCallion, better informed and more participatory. Similar thinking has begun to manifest itself in the service-delivery world.

"Our strategic management office is all about innovation," says DiEmanuele. "When we set up project teams, they're multidisciplinary. The best people to solve a problem are the ones who deal with it on a daily basis."

For this approach to work, a leader needs to create a culture in which subordinates feel (a) that their ideas are welcome and important, and (b) that they have a stake in the future of the organization.

In the public sector, in politics, in the corporate world, and even in semi-professional sports, consultation is not only the wise course of action—our culture has come to expect it.

Opines James Boyd: "The players now want to know why. 'We're going to do this, and that's how we're going to win,' was the message before; now the message is, 'We're



going to do this, which will lead to this, and then this will lead to our success.”

“The public is far more involved—they know more now. We take our budget to the public for input now, which started five or six years ago. We never did that before,” says Hazel McCallion. “You do have to have confidence, but you also have to recognize your weaknesses. There’s a lot of good information out there, if you’re prepared to seek it. You learn that you have to work with others—it’s the combination of the expertise and knowledge of others that allows you to be a success.”

For Colin Saldanha, the same holds true in the world of governance boards—as he puts it, “the agile board” is not managed, but facilitated.

“Leadership with collaboration and consultation is not to be perceived as a sign of weakness. True leadership at a board meeting is not for you to put forward your point of view but to ensure that everybody around the table, with their diverse skill sets, presents their points of view and contributes to the discussion. At any board level, members are picked and vetted for a reason.”

Which raises another important issue: in organizations where input is welcomed and subordinates are expected to fulfill and understand multiple, ever-changing roles, the criteria for hiring change.

“Over the years, one of the areas where I’ve become more successful is in building teams of people,” says Michelle DiEmanuele. “It becomes more important to hire someone with a diverse set of skills, rather than someone to come and do a specific job.”

That’s exactly what Diane Saldanha feels she received from the MBiotech program—the ability to do anything in her field, rather than a high level of specialization in one area.

“You can’t just teach a person to do one job anymore,” explains Dr. Krull. “Why teach someone the granularity of a single position when the positions are always changing? The challenge now is to create an adaptable person.”

The Solid Core

None of this is to say that agile, innovative organizations don’t need strong leaders. A collaborative and creative organizational culture is in fact very much still rooted in sound leadership skills. Without them, collaboration becomes disintegration, and creativity becomes chaos.

Vision and communication skills are mandatory. Once all of that advice has been listened to, once the proposals have been made and the ideas tabled, a leader must digest it and articulate a direction accounting for the larger picture.

“I think that’s where the leadership comes in,” says Dr. Colin Saldanha. “There’s a collaborative connectivity, an engagement process...and then being able to articulate a vision, and to test it and make appropriate changes.”

DiEmanuele concurs: “The vast majority of the job is about being an exceptionally good communicator—about listening, and then sharing.”

And the articulation of a vision entails making difficult decisions. Not every idea is a winner; at some point, some stakeholders will need to take a backseat, just as, on a hockey team, not everybody can be a power forward.

“All of these players want to do more, but we need to maximize their skill sets by defining their roles,” says James Boyd. “In order for teams to be successful, there are going to be people doing things that they don’t want to do. There’s shot-blocking, face-offs, screening the goalie, killing penalties instead of leading power plays—it’s when players accept these roles that your team really prospers.”

Values and integrity are two words that insinuate themselves repeatedly into the conversation, both as a means of ensuring ethical growth and of motivating a team. ▶

**HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA**

**STELLA AMBLER, MP
MISSISSAUGA SOUTH**

Constituency Office:
260 Lakeshore Road East,
Mississauga, ON L5G 1G9
Tel: (905) 278 - 4111
Fax: (905) 278 - 4440
Email: Stella.Ambler@parl.gc.ca
www.stellaambler.com

Ontario

**Charles Sousa, MPP
Mississauga South**

Constituency Office:
120 Lakeshore Road West, Unit 1 & 2
Mississauga, Ontario L5H 1E8
Tel: (905) 274-8228 Fax: (905) 274-8552
Email: csousa.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
www.charlessousa.ca

“Creating a set of shared values is very important for an organization,” says Diane Saldanha. “The best way—and it takes a little more time—is really understanding the different motivations that people have, and finding a common thread.”

A distinct set of values also protects a leader from the more adverse aspects of being receptive to outside opinions. A leader without the ability to turn inwards, towards a core set of inner beliefs, is a leader that will, as Hazel McCallion puts it, “play politics and attempt to be everything to everybody.”

DiEmanuele picks up on this thread. “If you look at the book *Good to Great* [by James C. Collins], a Level 5 leader is fundamentally more of an introvert than an extrovert. Leadership is actually a very lonely role, and having a good sense of self is very important. The public persona you assume as a leader can morph you, at times.”

Being able to look inwards for answers is important, because in any sector there’s a point where consultation has to stop. Even in politics, there are times when the electorate is just plain wrong. We often forget that we don’t live in a democracy, but a *representative* democracy; we elect leaders because not everyone has the time or inclination to fully educate themselves about every civic issue. Hazel McCallion gives the example of politicians or citizens that want both reduced taxes and more public services.

“One of my successes has been that I’m not afraid to tell them the way it is. When they ask for something that I feel is not justified, I don’t just say ‘no’; I take the time to explain why something just isn’t feasible.”

While internal harmony is desirable, external conflict is inevitable. Leaders must be able to do battle on behalf of their organizations, and nobody is better known for this than “Hurricane

Hazel.” “In negotiations, there comes a time when you have to get tough. I’ve gotten tough with developers and with others. I remember when Terminal 3 was being built at Pearson Airport and they didn’t want to pay development levies. I said, you better build the biggest septic tank you can find, because we aren’t going to hook you up to the sewers.”

Tomorrow

Dr. Colin Saldanha ended off our interview with a somewhat worrisome thought: “I think there’s a period of uncertainty we’re going through with leadership, and it might be because we haven’t engaged the youth enough.”

Diane’s response: “I’ve been very fortunate to have a variety of role models, including my dad, Dr. Krull, Kathy Hay [of the Credit Valley Hospital Foundation] and Shelley White [of the United Way]. Good mentors are hard to find—we need current leaders to reach out to our youth. The millennial generation is very determined, and that’s a good thing, however the guidance and perspective that experience can provide together with youthful enthusiasm make for essential building blocks for future leaders.”

If Dr. Krull’s Master of Biotechnology program demonstrates anything, it’s that Mississauga’s leaders of tomorrow can only be prepared by exposure to the organizations of today.

“Whether it’s an elite hockey, music or dance program,” says James Boyd, “young people who get involved are making a lot of sacrifices in that competitive environment. That’s how they learn the ability to give of themselves, and I think it pays off.”

The successful transition of leadership in Mississauga may have much to do with distributing leadership to young people who will someday take the reins.

For the Record | Police Chief Jennifer Evans

Words by Chris Carriere

Female leaders have always played a huge role in Mississauga’s life. On September 25, 2012, Peel Police Service Board Chair Emil Kolb announced the appointment of the first female Chief of the Peel Regional Police, Jennifer Evans. We contacted the new chief and asked her to sound off on the challenges that the Peel Police face.

Chris Carriere: Peel Police were cited for being reluctant to investigate misconduct by its officers. We asked Chief Evans for her view on accountability.

Jennifer Evans: Public trust and confidence is the cornerstone of the Peel Regional Police. We will continue to hold our members accountable for their actions and are committed to being a transparent organization.

CC: With only 14 percent of Peel Police identifying as racial minorities, representativeness is another key issue.

JE: While our recruiting efforts continue to address diversity issues, all members are fully capable of connecting with our

diverse community mosaic. This includes participating in cultural and community events, providing diversity training and youth education programs (such as Peel Children’s Safety Village and the Youth in Policing Initiative), and making our services more accessible. We continue to ensure our programs and partnerships are meeting the needs of the diverse community we serve. In 2011, there were 212 new hires (70 uniformed and 142 civilian) which included 0.9% aboriginal and 0.5% persons with disabilities. From 2010 to 2011, racialized hires increased from 28.8% to 45.8% and female hires increased from 45.9% to 48.1%.

CC: We asked how her experience as a violent crime analyst would influence her approach to the top job.

JE: The opportunities I’ve had in my career have enhanced my sense of being accountable to the public for my decisions. Policies and procedures are important to ensure that everyone within the organization is performing consistently

under the same guidelines. I am very proud of the work done by the men and women of the Peel Regional Police. My past experience has taught me that, while the responsibility is mine, most often the path to success is through collaboration and teamwork.

CC: Turning the tables, we also asked Chief Evans what she needs from the community.

JE: Sir Robert Peel, the founder of modern policing, famously said, “The police are the public and the public are the police.” We look for the public to continue to work in conjunction with Peel Regional Police and together we can pursue a safer community. Our website (peelpolice.ca) has some great info on many PRP-related topics, and our Crime Prevention Bureau (peelpolice.ca/en/crimeprevention.asp) has a number of fact sheets available that will help residents better protect themselves.

(All items sourced from 2011 Annual Performance Report.)

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