

# Canadian municipality develops “one-city” approach with unified leadership development training

## A modern vision for transformation

Serving an estimated 250,000 citizens, the City of Saskatoon’s purview includes fire and police departments, water/sewer management, recreational activities and funding for various civic boards. Meeting the city’s governance and budgetary demands while nurturing a thriving community requires innovative strategies to influence employee performance toward organizational goals empowered by consistent leadership processes.

With a vision to modernize the organization, the new city manager sought to drive successful goal attainment with a “one-city” approach by ushering in an overdue change in management development and execution. “One of the pillars of the overall organizational transformation was to transform HR—to really solidify it as a modern, supportive, strategic practice,” noted CHRO Sarah Cameron. “It became really apparent that we hadn’t addressed the development of our leaders in a systematic, coordinated way.” Maintaining their corporate value of setting priorities, the organization recognized that a leadership investment would significantly uphold their People Matter value.

Factors highlighting the need for aligned management development entailed disparate leadership approaches and employee experiences dictated by who managed them. Vast differences in functions and multiple unions also contributed to the divide in leadership mindsets. Existing leadership training provided a solid start, but it was time to evolve the training to support the organization’s transformation. This opportunity led Cameron to The Center for Leadership Studies as she had previous experience with the simple yet scalable power of the Situational Leadership® methodology. “I just went straight to Situational Leadership® because I’d seen the immediate and tangible impact that it had for leaders.”

Industry: **Government**

Number of Employees: **4,500**

### Challenge

Uniting disparate departments’ organization, management and leadership practices under a singular framework for consistent execution and employee experiences

### Solution

Deploying Situational Leadership® virtual programs and sustainment content to instill, hone and standardize leadership and coaching skills across management and teams

“Situational Leadership® was a solution that I knew was tested and proven. I felt that it could be relatable and easy to understand at all levels of the organization and could be rolled out successfully in a consistent way.”

**Sarah Cameron**  
Chief Human Resources Officer

Interested in learning more? [info@situational.com](mailto:info@situational.com) | 919.335.8763 | [situational.com](http://situational.com)

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## A strategic path forward

The Center for Leadership Studies devised a strategic learning path for the organization using virtual delivery technology. To instill supervisor accountability, provide uniform opportunities for employee coaching and integrate a cohesive model and performance vocabulary for how to develop performers, it incorporates the foundational *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* and the complementary *Situational Coaching®* programs.

*Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* relies on prework assessment data to gauge leadership style tendencies and teaches the Situational Leadership® approach. *Situational Coaching®* delves deeper into that groundwork for more meaningful and productive coaching interactions. To support learning retention, each course offers related microlearning, Discussion Guides and gamification for ongoing skill development.

## Creating champions for change

With approximately 500 leaders scheduled for training, the initial delivery involved a cohort of cross-divisional executives, safety leadership and frontline HR staff to “create change champions,” establish familiarity with the leadership language and accumulate buy-in. These early participants indicated a highly successful program that will revolutionize the organization’s leadership development efforts.

A more comprehensive rollout will target the organization’s remaining leaders followed by a robust sustainment component led by HR. According to Organizational Development Consultant Jodi Fick-Dryka, “The whole program itself will help lift up that ‘one-city’ approach.”

Well on the path to changing the leadership culture, the organization is considering the *Situational Leadership®: Taking Charge* course to engage individual contributors in their own performance development journeys. Says Cameron, “The only way to embed this in the organization, is if everybody is using the tools, the language and the processes.”

As the City of Saskatoon evolves their training initiatives, we remain poised to support their efforts through partnership and look forward to sharing their forthcoming successes.

### SOLUTIONS EMPLOYED

- *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* introduces the Situational Leadership® Model and four-step process for influencing performance
  - Self and 360° assessments establish a baseline for leadership tendencies
- *Situational Coaching®* maximizes Situational Leadership® application in coaching discussions with the parallel Situational Coaching® Process
- Sustainment materials comprising targeted:
  - Microlearning that reinforces training through self-paced modules
  - Discussion Guides for use in performance conversations or self-reflection offering insight into leaders’ influence and coaching behaviors
  - Gamification to provide learning practice and application through interactive simulations

“Leaders can take what they learned—literally, the next day after they take the training—and implement it.”

**Jodi Fick-Dryka**  
Organizational Development Consultant

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