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## Case Study: City of Mississauga

### Background

- The Forton Group creates learning environments for managers, coaches and trainers globally, to deliver its leadership coaching skills programme known as 'Ignite'.
- The Train-the-Trainer course (T3) lasts three days, during which Coach-Facilitators learn about what it means to create a transformational learning environment, in experiential ways.
- The Ignite and T3 workshops embody coaching competencies defined by the International Coach Federation (ICF) and have been accredited by the ICF since 2009



### The Client: City of Mississauga

**Formed in 1974, Mississauga is now recognized as Canada's 6th largest and fastest growing major city with a population of 729,000 residents representing cultures from around the world.**

It's Strategic Plan in place since 1992 was updated following a public consultation in 2009. Thousands of ideas emerged which helped shape the city's Vision Statement: what success will look like when the City has realized its Strategic Plan.

### The OD perspective: implementing the Vision

The City's OD team saw the issue of 'building leadership capacity' as core to realising the City's vision and transforming itself from its current role. Leadership coaching was seen as an essential tool – both to develop personal leadership skills and for leaders to develop those qualities in others.

### The Ignite & T3 workshops

In 2010, led by Professional Certified Coach, Cynthia Calluori, the City sent two senior organisation development staff to attend the Forton Group T3 in Toronto. Cynthia acted as a learning partner to Catherine and Mary Lynn, to deliver the T3 and to support them in successfully introducing the Ignite materials inside their organisation.



The Ignite workshop uses a process of theory/lecture, real-life coaching demonstrations and practice, discussion and reflection to embed the learning in participants. As well as an in-person element, participants join in group teleclasses to review and share the application of learning back in the workplace. The T3 workshop builds on this method and adds in 'teach-backs' from the Coach Facilitators. The moment of 'transformational learning', which regularly occurs in professional leadership coaching, is called the 'lightbulb moment' in these workshops.

### Our vision

"Mississauga will inspire the world as a dynamic and beautiful global city for creativity and innovation, with vibrant, safe and connected communities; where we celebrate the rich diversity of our cultures, our historic villages, Lake Ontario, and the Credit River valley.

*"A place where people choose to be"*





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Cynthia described her focus as preparing Catherine and Mary Lynn as Coach-Facilitators: to be able to operate from the five core leadership coaching principles that underpin the Professional Leadership Coaching Model.

### **The personal perspective**

Cathy's developmental objective was two-fold: to deepen her own coaching skills and to "enhance the growth and development of our high potential managers and our senior leadership team." From Cathy's point of view she discovered a unique solution for enhancing the City's leaders' skills sets and supporting the City of Mississauga's strategic priorities. "This really is a one of a kind learning experience that quickly yields tangible results."

Mary Lynn's experience was also profound: "The workshop was unlike any I have attended before because of its immediate impact on myself as a professional and for the organization that I support. It left me not only feeling prepared and motivated to begin our launch of the Leadership Coaching at the City of Mississauga but also started a personal shift that has since enabled me to operate from a very different space."

Mary Lynn described the personal experience of being a participant: "I was able to actively experience and witness the coach approach to leadership but also how this translates to a coach approach to facilitation." She also described the transformational learning moment, its practical application and impact: "a significant shift occurred that prompted a new way of operating which I was able to transfer into my role at the City of Mississauga and where I saw immediate and lasting results within the launch of our journey to build our leadership capacity."

Cynthia's team was acknowledged by Cathy and Mary Lynn: "Each of the Forton Group partners brought unique qualities that, when combined, demonstrated the power of partnership, possibility and trust which feed into a rich learning environment..." Cynthia was there for the first Ignite course delivered by the city's newly-accredited co-leaders for moral and practical support.

### **The City of Mississauga leadership conference**

Later that year, Cathy, Mary Lynn and Cynthia shared these principles with the City of Mississauga leadership team (300+ people) including the City Manager and at a Leadership Workshop that was formally launched by the Mayor.

The coach-facilitators were challenged on a particular element of a leadership style that the audience were being asked to consider. At that moment the CEO stood up and publicly supported the new direction. This was considered a pivotal moment in the event, and is used as a touchstone to refer back to as new behaviours are being introduced and supported.

The event also demonstrated the importance of senior leaders being challenged by learners, when a particular issue was discussed openly and endorsed by the City Manager in front of the whole team. This episode was later used to remind people when incorporating the learning back in the workplace.