Company Overview:
West Fraser is the world’s largest lumber and OSB (Oriented Strand Board) producer, and publicly traded on NYSE and TSE. In 2018, they employed more than 9,000 people across their operations in over 50 locations in Canada and USA, with a revenue of C$6.1 Billion. In addition to lumber, they make plywood, pulp, MDF, specialty wood products, and produce electricity. In 2021 West Fraser acquired Norbord adding over $2 billion in assets and approximately 2,400 employees in Canada, USA and Europe.

The Business Issues:
In 2018, West Fraser was looking for further training and education for their most senior leadership group across the company as part of their ongoing development. At the time, this group consisted of about 100 employees across Canada and USA and included operational mill managers, regional managers, and senior corporate managers in areas such as finance, transportation, human resources, and sales. The performance of this senior cohort is vital to the success of West Fraser, and a number of these individuals are key to its succession plan for the most senior positions in the company. The vision was to partner with a vendor to provide an advanced leadership program as a next step in leadership training and development to the most senior group of leaders. The program focused on improving performance through operational excellence and high-performance teams to build leadership depth and prepare the Company for the future.

The Development Challenge:
- To “raise the bar” and extend the performance capacity of senior leadership and the groups or divisions they lead
- To enhance capacity in leading winning teams, cultivating high-performing teams and shaping team dynamics
- To further increase capacity in operational efficiency and contribute to strengthened department performance and improved business results
- To create a coherent leadership culture across West Fraser; one that is based on unifying visions, common languages and shared frameworks

The Program:
Two 2-day modules in Leading High-Performance Teams and in Operational Efficiency were delivered by the co-Academic Directors Dr. Alex Trisoglio and Prof. Mahesh Nagarajan. The pilot program had 20 participants from Canada and USA, including 3 members of the Executive Team. During the in-person training modules, simulations and case studies were introduced and peer group learnings helped to strengthen internal networking as these participants do not normally work together. Internal guest speakers were invited to further support existing learning culture, sharing valuable leadership lessons that has driven West Fraser to its success. An external guest speaker from a different industry in manufacturing also further enhance learnings on operational efficiency.
A critical part of the program was the Action Learning Projects (ALP). Action Learning is an iterative process of integrating contextualized action with mindful learning. If the Action Learning is linked to real-time projects in the organization, this can translate into a high return-on-investment in leadership training. Individuals were to complete ALPs within the next 6-12 months, to sustain the learning and transition from training modules to application of real-world problems-solving skills and critical thinking skills in a broader context for adaptive learning. Participants were expected to investigate potential ALPs during training modules, which could be existing projects or new projects. Dr. Alex Trisoglio provided coaching sessions to the participants throughout their ALP journey.

A mini-board of ALP sponsors (consisting of the Executive Team) was formed to monitor and oversee the progress of the ALPs, while Dr. Alex Trisoglio also acted as the advisor to the mini-board in providing an academic lens - helping the Mini-Board understand the context and the link between the ALPs and the learning modules, and how the ALPs are an extension of the individual’s development, as well as encouraging the Mini-Board to consider the impact of the ALPs on P & L, or if there are other areas of impact to West Fraser (e.g. on culture and leading teams). Further details on the ALP is illustrated in the diagram below.
One of the goals of the pilot program was to gather feedback from the participants, as well as the Executive Team, to finetune the program for the future 4 cohorts. The pilot program was a great success and the second cohort was delivered in early 2020 before the Pandemic. A 3rd cohort will be planned when international travel restrictions are lifted, as West Fraser has a strong preference for face-to-face deliveries, along with opportunities for internal networking during the program amongst their senior leaders across the globe.

**The Impact:**

One of the program outcomes that West Fraser has identified in 2018, was to prepare West Fraser’s senior leaders for their next role, taking ownership and being proactive in dealing with opportunities and challenges, and being accountable to drive the company forward for the next level of growth and improved financial results.

A total of 4 participants from the 2 cohorts has since been promoted to the Executive Team, and 3 from the Executive Team who attended the Program has been promoted to 2 President roles and a VP role with greater responsibilities over business lines.

The ALPs have created the greatest impact to the development of the individuals and the business lines they lead. Participants were able to apply learnings from the training modules, specifically:

- Cultivating trust while suspending judgement, enhancing a positive organizational climate
- Increase self-awareness and understand how emotions, perceptions, actions and words affect others in managing relationships
- Know how to draw the best out of team members and allow room for development and growth – be ready to provide constructive feedback and coaching for performance management
- Develop skills to motivate, influence and energize the team - inspire and empower
- Develop collaborative and communication skills to better help avoid and resolve conflicts
- Facilitate healthy group dynamics and resolve conflict
- Lead team to higher levels of performance for better results and personal satisfaction
- Drive strategy with aligned operations in processes involving capacity, inventory, quality, safety, and data.
- Design operational processes to achieve resilience and agility - a requirement for operational excellence
- Understand how do processes and people interact - leverage people and culture in operational excellence

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Since 1990, Rocky Mountaineer, the world’s largest privately owned luxury tourist train, has welcomed more than 2 million guests to inhale the mountain air and let nature take their breath away. As one of Canada’s Best Managed Companies and one of Canada’s Top Employers, Rocky Mountaineer believes that success is driven by dedicated professionals who all share the common goal of achieving growth and delivering exceptional guest experience. The company embraces diversity and take great pride in the fact that the team comprises of a broad spectrum of nationalities, age groups and abilities.

Company Overview:

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The Business Issues:

In 2010, Rocky Mountaineer conducted a Leadership Competency Assessment (LPI) which revealed major gaps in the leadership team’s competencies. They recognized a need to ramp up the business acumen of their senior executives, to create a more cohesive work environment and to creatively increase their revenue streams.

This program demonstrates UBC Sauder’s ability to work with a group of senior leaders, delivering intensive strategic leadership content over many years. The program was originally developed for the C-suite and VPs. This engendered a huge incentive for company directors to take the program, as it means they will be included in the company’s succession plan. A second version (Accelerated Leadership Development Program) was subsequently delivered to the Directors level. UBC Sauder has recently been engaged to continue with a managerial foundations program for the Manager Level employees (Leadership Exploration and Development Program).

The Development Challenge:

- To provide a learning experience that enables the client’s leadership team to better lead and manage in a changing environment
- Deepen participants’ understanding of various business fields
- Groom potential successors
- Reinforce company culture, values, strategic objectives

The Program:

The Original Rocky Mountaineer CEO Randy Powell worked with Dr. Darren Dahl (Senior Associate Dean, Innovate BC Professor in Sales and Sales Management, and Director of RH Lee Graduate School) together on content design, and co-taught the program.

The Executive Development Program, which leads to an Executive Certificate in Business Leadership, is a multi-module, integrated business leadership program that includes the following in addition to an Action Learning Project:

**Business Acumen**
- Business Strategy
- Financial Management
- Process Improvement
- Operational Efficiency

**Creativity, Innovation and Growth**
- Personal Creativity
- Experimentation
- Enhancing Creativity in Others
- Entrepreneurship

**Leadership I**
- Organizational Behaviour & Human Resources
- Visioning: Inspiring Others
- Leading Yourself: Balance and Organizational Skills
- Leading Others: Change Management, Accountability and Support, Coaching and Development
- Negotiations

**Leadership II**
- Strategy & Leadership
- Successful Organic Growth: Introduction to Strategic Cascading
- How Leaders Execute Strategy
- Leading to Inspire Action
By attending this program, participants:
- Lead and manage better in a changing environment, and prepare the organization for the future
- Develop a fundamental understanding of various business fields and their interrelationships
- Become prepared to advance within the organization
- Understand Rocky Mountaineer’s culture, values, and strategic objectives
- Apply the learning gained in the classroom to facilitate change within their current work environment

The modules of the two-week Director’s level program (Accelerated Leadership Development Program) is shown on the right:

Participants are divided into teams and each team is sponsored by a VP. At the end of the program, participants present their ideas as part of an applied business innovation project.

UBC Sauder has now developed a multiple cohort, multi-tiered education program for Rocky Mountaineer and is credited for helping them make strides in their business model and in strengthening their corporate culture.

**Why Rocky Mountaineer Partnered with UBC Sauder Executive Education**

“At Rocky Mountaineer, our people are our greatest asset. The program we have developed with Sauder has allowed us to combine growing our people while achieving real business outcomes for a strong return on investment.”

Steve Sammut
President and CEO, Rocky Mountaineer
The Haisla Nation is the band government of the Haisla people and their mission is to build a powerful, prosperous and proud community, healthy in mind, body and spirit. There are about 1,700 Haisla people, many of them living in Kitamaat Village in BC.

Haisla Nation Council consists of 11 departments: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Community Development, Health, Lands and Resources, Environment, Economic Development, Education O-Grade 12, Employment and Training, and Fisheries. In the recent years, many economic opportunities were presented to the Haisla Nation, and it has been working hard to ready itself with newly formed partnerships and collaborations. Along with the economic growth, the need for training and professional development services had also increased as Haisla Nation Council took on more and new challenges.

As Haisla is shaping a new future, where individuals and community participate fully in the economy, Haisla Nation Council makes every effort to employ members of their band. Current managers are mostly band members and have risen through the ranks in respective specialized areas without formal training in business and management. Haisla Nation Council encourages continuous investment in and support of professional development for its band members, and since 2013, many of their employees and senior staff have traveled to UBC Sauder Executive Education’s Vancouver campus for our Open Enrolment programs.

In early 2019, Haisla Nation Council reached out to enquire about UBC Sauder’s Executive Education Certificate in Advanced Management for their new and soon-to-be managers, who needed support in their managerial skills, as well as topics in business acumen. Haisla Nation Council also saw a need to support some of the non-managerial staff who could also benefit from the business acumen training. After discussions with the client, we proposed a customized, co-branded UBC Sauder – Haisla Nation Council Certificate of Management.

The Background:

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The Challenge:

- To provide essential and foundational business and management knowledge to various levels of experience and expertise within the audience mix, including non-managerial staff
- To create a customized program that would complement Haisla Nation Council’s Manager-In-Training Program, where participants are prepared for managerial roles through job shadowing and learning on the job
- To enable new managers to take ownership and be proactive in dealing with opportunities and challenges, being accountable to drive the organization forward for the next level of growth

The Program:

The 6 learning modules in the certificate program were customized from UBC Sauder’s Open Enrolment courses, so that the content would be relevant to Haisla Nation’s context. These learning modules were designed to incorporate a mix of pre-readings, exercises, role-plays, group discussions, and case studies for applied learning. The entire certificate program was delivered at Haisla Nation Council’s Kitamaat office. As a component of the program delivery, Sauder arranged to offer instructors a Cultural Awareness and Safety briefing from our Indigenous Content Initiative Program Manager.
The initial target was around 20 participants for each of the learning modules, although not all 20 participants would complete the certificate program. By the end of 2019, 7 members had completed the certificate program. The program brought together participants from many parts of the organization and increased their capacity in:

- Learning and applying new approaches to business and management
- Strengthening competencies in managing conflict and difficult behavior while building trust and teamwork
- Effective communication and presentation skills
- Building skills to spot opportunities and understand the financial impact
- Managing challenges through the promotion of connections and cooperation between various departments
- Extending the performance of the participants and their teams
- Helping to accelerate Haisla Nation Council’s growth by aligning departmental strategy to organizational strategy

In addition to the UBC Sauder - Haisla Nation Council Certificate of Management launched during 2019, the Haisla Nation Council had also engaged with UBC Sauder for other learning solutions in business writing and leadership excellence for administrative professionals.

**Why Haisla Nation Council Partnered with UBC Sauder Executive Education:**

“Over the past 10 years, we have seen a huge spike in the economic growth in the local area and within our own community. Haisla Nation Council strives to build capacity within our own nation and this includes hiring, training and retaining our own membership to take on leadership roles within the organization. We noticed some areas for improvement that ultimately would help us in improving how we serve the Haisla membership so we wanted to run a program that would help our staff increase their skill sets in a management position. Sauder assisted us in building our capacity in leadership roles and bringing new skills into the organization.”

Kailee Gardiner  
Employment & Training Manager, Haisla Nation Council

**Program Outcomes:**

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Strategic Natural Resource Consultants (SNRC) is one of the most highly regarded natural resource consulting firms on the West Coast. SNRC adopts an innovative and resourceful model of problem solving that can be seen in their technical expertise, project management and planning. This belief in resourceful thinking carries into their implementation as well. They employ dynamic on-the-ground professionals across British Columbia. Their personnel are industry leaders in resource and land management, professional forestry, construction support services, environmental science, geomatics, and remote site project development.

Company Overview:

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The Business Issues:

In 2015, SNRC was a young company with approximately 180 employees. The average age of staff was also relatively young, yet they worked in a conservative, mature industry usually characterized by a model where technical experts and strong personalities are promoted over those who exhibit contemporary leadership skills.

SNRC wished to create a broader and shared culture of leadership across the company, rather than leadership gravitating to the more dominant and outspoken employees. They wanted to promote a leadership culture that would foster teamwork, cohesion, adaptability, performance, and safety, while supporting its own unique people-oriented culture. SNRC also wanted to strengthen their business to a point of competitive advantage in their industry.

The Development Challenge:

SNRC were seeking an external learning partner to work with the organization in creating a leadership development opportunity specifically built for their unique organisational requirements.

SNRC also asked that the Program...

- Accommodate the diversity of experience within the organisation (both in terms of leadership and more broadly) and engage a wide variety of personnel from multiple geographic regions
- Help overcome internal biases and perceptions of what leadership, authority, power and influence means at SNRC
- Create a common language, common experience, and common understanding

The Program:

UBC Sauder Faculty and Executive Education Staff worked closely with the Senior Leadership Team and other SNRC personnel to design and develop the program content.

Initially designed to be delivered over 21 months, the SNRC Program consisted of 6 two-day modules for Team Leads, and a 7th two-day module for managers and executives. Some of the modules were designed in such a way that the 2 groups were able to attend the same session, while the remaining modules were attended by each cohort separately. Additional development needs surfaced as the program progressed and some additional (two-day) modules were added. The final program consisted of 10 modules, completed over a two and a half
year period. At the end of the program, participants were required to complete a capstone project that integrated all of the program learnings in a team-based simulation designed to help each individual declare their personal leadership vision.

SNRC selected UBC Sauder Executive Education as their learning partner to fulfil these requirements and to achieve their vision of creating a culture of shared leadership.

The Impact:

As a result of the Program and their long-term commitment to organizational change and performance improvement, SNRC now has a common point of reference about what leadership looks like in their context for consistent leadership practices across the workplace. There are also systems and processes in place for holding employees responsible and accountable.

Since undertaking this initiative SNRC has been able to:
- Define what leadership is (and is not) at SNRC and create a broad base of “shared leadership practice” with people who support a culture of peer accountability while also providing leadership;
- Entrust leaders/managers and other experienced personnel to think and work strategically in complex situations;
- Develop different pathways to approach problem-solving in teams;
- Improve self-awareness, communication, influencing and negotiation skills.

In the past, those who pushed the hardest at SNRC became the “leaders.” After the Program, the more-assertive staff have learnt to adjust their leadership styles, while the less-assertive staff have stepped up, demonstrating positive behaviour change. As a leadership team, there is also more trust, transparency, understanding and commitment to the company values. In 2019, SNRC was recognized as one of Canada’s Top 100 Small & Medium Employers.

Why SNRC Partnered with UBC Sauder Executive Education

“For over 15 years, our company has grown an excellent reputation around the quality of our work and our approach to delivering consulting services in the natural resource sectors. But we knew we could do better - for our crew, our clients and our communities. We believe the difference lies in leadership. Leadership across the organization and at all levels, expressed consistently and continuously until it is culturally embedded in our organization. Sauder helped us to bring out our best and realize what successful leadership feels like.”

Jonathan Lok, RFT
Managing Director, SNRC

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