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## YMCA Canada's Leadership Development

The commitment that YMCA Canada has made to leadership development is rare and extraordinary in the non-profit sector.

The priority level accorded to leadership development originates in the roots of the organization and its mission, which is to develop the capacity of individuals and communities. "Developing potential and capacity is part of our organizational psyche and the philosophy permeates everything we do," explains Janet Emmett, Interim CEO, YMCA Canada. "From the point of view of developing our talent, throughout our 150 year history, we have always been able to grow our own," she says. "While that doesn't mean we don't value and welcome people from the outside, we have realized time and again that nurturing our talent internally has a positive impact on our performance."

The program consists of several components, including a national program entitled the YMCA Canada Leadership & Management Development Program. Targeting middle level management, it focuses on growing senior leadership within the organization and has four levels: entry, mid, senior and operational excellence. The training drivers of each are based in developing competencies identified as critical to maximizing performance at the participant's level of the organization.

1. Entry Level – focuses on learning and execution of identified core competencies
2. Mid Level – focuses on managing people and implementing strategy
3. Senior Level – focuses on creating and leading strategy
4. Operational Excellence – focuses on managing large programs and facilities

Recognizing that formalized in-classroom training is only one part of a comprehensive leadership development program, YMCA Canada also uses a variety of activities to complement these training events, including on-the-job training. "We proactively and strategically include high-potential staff in national and regional work groups, thereby giving them the chance to grow and develop skills and abilities that may be outside of their day to day work," says Emmett.

Mentoring is yet another component of their staff development program, and is used with both new and high potential employees within the organization. "Employees are matched with mentors and they are encouraged to meet on a regular basis by phone or in person," says Emmett. She notes that there are more formalized guidelines to the mentorship of new CEOs. New CEOs are assigned another experienced YMCA CEO in close geographic proximity. An orientation is developed for each new CEO and the YMCA has guidelines for the first 100 days of the new CEOs' employment. These guidelines include: key orientation activities such as meetings with key stakeholders, key operational learnings, contacting Board members, identifying any change agenda items, etc. The mentor helps the new CEO with any questions that arise during the "onboarding" process as well as provides support in the first year of employment.

