

Spotlight on ILA Institutional Members

ILA Members are doing amazing leadership work around the world, from starting new degree programs to nurturing young people who make a difference, from running innovative workshops and seminars to fostering organizational change. We are pleased to shine an ILA spotlight on the programs of our members. If you would like to nominate yourself or another ILA institutional member to be featured on these pages, please contact ILA at ila@ila-net.org.

Spotlight on The Refinery Leadership Partners:

Brutal Honesty Goes Both Ways Between Leadership Firm and Clients

by Rosie Steeves, The Refinery Leadership Partners

If you ask the people at The Refinery Leadership Partners about the state of today's business leadership, be prepared for brutal honesty. "For the most part, it's not good," says co-founder Rosie Steeves. "There are pockets of brilliance, but generally what we see, and what research confirms, is leadership that's uninspired or ineffective."

This kind of bold talk characterizes the Vancouver-based leadership development firm, opened by Steeves and partner Barbara Ross-Denroche in 2002. Authorities on leadership and organizational development, the pair joined forces to create an organization that would address a significant need in the industry for an approach that was deep, holistic and fearless. "There was a real unwillingness in the industry to say it like it is, to tell the emperor he has no clothes," recalls Steeves. "We wanted to be the leadership company that would say what other firms wouldn't." Apparently, brutal honesty was exactly what the business community was waiting for. The



Barbara Ross-Denroche

Refinery quickly won a reputation as an industry trailblazer, along with accolades like the 2007 Canadian Award for Training Excellence from Canadian Society for Training and Development, given for a leadership program created for Cameco Corp.

Not ones to rest on their laurels, Steeves and Ross-Denroche are leading the industry charge once again, using every opportunity to put a challenge out to senior executives to start paying more than lip service to leadership development. "While organizations are talking more about leadership development, it's also true that many really just want to check the box and move on," says Ross-Denroche. "It's all too easy to work on the surface, to do a few courses or retreats and be done with it. But that kind of leadership development can only take you so far for so long. Whatever workshops we lead or systems we create, our work always starts with personal development, helping individuals understand who they are as leaders and why."



Rosie Steeves (L) with John Clarke and Teresa Quilty from Cameco. The Refinery Leadership Partners and Cameco Corporation received the 2007 Canadian Society for Training and Development (CSTD) Award, which recognizes exemplary Canadian workplace training and performance programs.

Steeves and Ross-Denroche are the first to admit it takes courage to embrace the kind of intensive programs they offer, especially for executives who aren't accustomed to admitting weakness. But according to clients like Heriberto Gines, organizational effectiveness director at Toyota de Puerto Rico, the results are worth it. "Definitely my journey to become a more effective leader has taken me through a path that I was not expecting, a path of hard work and challenge," says Gines, "but also a path on which I have achieved great success and satisfaction."

Continued on page 16...

16.

Ross-Denroche says that clients like Gines, "The people who are willing to face their fears and do the work, those are the people and the organizations we want to work with." Those people and organizations want to work with them too. The Refinery has grown steadily over the last six

years, extending its unique brand of tough love to organizations across Canada and the US and, soon, Mexico. "More and more organizations are getting it," says Steeves. "They're seeking us out because they want leadership development that digs deeper."

Refinery clients are also benefiting from the firm's expertise at creating organizational systems. "You can't develop individual leaders in isolation of organizational systems and expect that work to stick," stresses Steeves. "There's a reason we call them support systems." Paying close attention to systems at several levels, a team of Refinery organizational development specialists works alongside the firm's leadership practitioners to implement an integrated model for each client that will support sustained results.

Clearly The Refinery is a leadership firm to watch, claiming as it has a unique space in the leadership development community. Most illumi-

nating perhaps is how its approach seems to mirror what's happening in the world of leadership development at large. Just as the days of the heroic, all-knowing leader are fading, so are the days of the all-powerful consultant experts. No one at The Refinery will claim to have all the answers, but ask and you'll find plenty of folks who are excited to talk about what they're currently researching, questioning and measuring. "How can we tell our clients to dig deep and do the work if we don't do it ourselves?" says Steeves. It seems that brutal honesty goes both ways.



The Refinery is interested in hearing from readers on leadership issues in the workplace.

Contact us at info@refineryleadership.com or www.refineryleadership.com today to learn what we can do for you.

**ILA Members
Login to your Members Only
Web site to access
further information in the ILA
Member Directory.**

**Log in at: [www.ila-net.org/
Members/index.asp](http://www.ila-net.org/Members/index.asp)**

Welcome New Members February 2008

* Associated with an Institutional Membership

Kaled Alamarie New York City DEP

Erica Allgood* Regis University

Ayodele Ayeni Napier University

Sara Baird Amodio* Regis University

Brock Brown Integrity Consulting Services Ltd.

Christian Busnardo Washington State University

Seamus Clune* Eastern Univ.

Wayne Curtis Antioch University

Terri Emrick Indiana Wesleyan

University

Heather English The George Washington University

Mark Frein* Refinery Leadership Partners, Inc

Louis Fry Tarleton State University - Central Texas

Lori Garkovich* Center for Leadership Development

Emmanuel Guidibi Afrique Conseil

Charles Heller US Army Command & General Staff College

Charles Henderson NewsRx

Edwin Hollander

Tim Hoskin Ministry of Tourism Sport and Arts

Juanita Jolly Mataya Consulting Group

Kenneth Jones* Center for Leadership Development

Karen Kispert* Eastern University

Alon Lisak

Franklin Mays United States Air Force

Robin McCoy Univ. of San Diego

Debra Orr Roosevelt University

Andres Pfister Swiss Military Academy at the ETH Zuerich

Lissa Pohl* Center for Leadership Development

Randy Poon Dept. of Canadian Heritage

Continued on page 18...