

Horse Sense

Leadership and Team Programs

Participative Designs has been providing leadership, communication and personal development programs to the corporate sector since 1991, in 2003 we complemented that offering with an Equine Facilitated Leadership experience we call “Horse Sense for Leaders”.

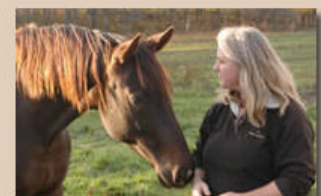
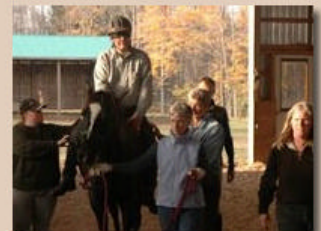
Horses naturally seek a strong, confident leader, this equine instinct provides a conduit for learning about human actions and interactions. They demand a high level of awareness, responsiveness and authenticity from their leaders. As flight animals, they are extremely sensitive to the attitudes, feelings and intent of people and show their response in their body language. Whether they are relaxed, comfortable and accepting of that person or are tense, uncertain or stressed by them is feedback that we use in the program.

A horse has no ego, their feedback is not masked by social or corporate titles they will reflect our attitude, approach and behaviour with absolute consistency and clarity. Learning to build a partnership with another living entity provides a catalyst for a team to discover how mindset, behaviors, actions and communication styles impact others, whether they are a customer, co-worker or a trustee on the board.

Our philosophy is based on learning by doing. Combining familiar concepts and models, workplace wisdom and hands-on experience with horses ensures participants gain understanding on how interactions in the arena suggest habits, behaviours and action that applies in the workplace.

Safety and quality of experience is a paramount concern for us, so participants work with horses that are all calm, well schooled in the language we use and have demonstrated willingness to work with others. Due to the unique nature of these programs we recommend sessions at minimum of one day as it allows time to experience the impact of relationships in our personal and professional goals.

Whether the quest is to improve Communication, enhance Leadership, strengthen Teamwork or initiate Change through a better awareness of self and others, Horse Sense programs have proven to be memorable and effective.





Horse Sense Leadership Accelerator

How do you know that someone is a leader?

Barry Z. Posner, PhD author of The Leadership Challenge says:

"While several hundred definitions exist in the literature, the most frequent and uncomplicated response is that "this person has followers." Within this simple observation is the powerful discovery that, fundamentally, leaders are defined by their followers.

Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow, and any discussion of leadership must attend to the dynamics of this relationship. Strategies, tactics, skills, and practices are hollow unless we understand the fundamental human aspirations that connect leaders and their constituents.

In our Horse Sense programs we accelerate the process learning how to build effective leadership relationships. We give leaders the opportunity to see the impact of their behaviour on another sentient being (the horse) and learn which behaviours build relationships - and which do not.

The Leadership Accelerator can be a stand alone program or an amazing way to enhance your existing leadership programs. This program focuses on the skills beyond subject matter expertise that leaders need to truly inspire, motivate and align their teams.

Learning Outcomes:

- build awareness of strengths
- learn about impact of body language and how to use body language to support leadership
- receive clear compelling feedback on leadership gaps and a chance to try out new behaviours
- experience the power of building true willingness through trust and respect
- explore the concepts of control, compliance, empowerment and engagement
- achieve a greater sense of themselves as leaders
- catalyse leadership potential and experience explosive growth in capability
- develop, test and solidify strategies for dealing with challenges

This is an action-packed leadership program like you have never experienced before.

"I have to tell you that having done my fair share of leadership training over the years - there is sometimes a touch of cynicism approaching leadership training sessions. I've been around a while, and seen a lot.

The program at Birch Haven was exceptional! The team building and understanding within the day's program was really the best I have encountered and the self-learning was outstanding. I am a convert who not only looks forward to the next session - but can hardly wait to see what new learning and understandings result from it.

Thank you for a great leadership experience absolutely laced with immediately useful strategies as well as plenty of fodder (bit of a pun on the horses there!) for reflection and future growth."



Horse Sense Team Accelerator

The *Team Accelerator* program offers Leadership and Operating Teams an opportunity to deepen their relationships through integrating personal insights and learning with an opportunity to explore issues of alignment, diversity, communication, trust and collaboration as a team.

The concepts we explore are ones that are core to many leadership and team programs – communication, authenticity, emotional intelligence, alignment, diversity, collaboration, negotiation, coaching, etc. What makes our program stand out is how we bring these concepts to life.

Rather than talk about the need to provide clear direction, lead with hearts, heads and hands, establish and build relationships based on trust and respect – we actually **do** all of these – and then immediately transfer the learning to real life situations. Participants report years after their Horse Sense program that they have never forgotten the lessons they learned from a horse.

Learning Outcomes

1. An expanded level of mutual understanding, trust and respect within the team.
2. Increased alignment in the team's thinking and strategies for moving forward.
3. An experience of leading authentically replacing compliance with true engagement.
4. Feedback on individual leadership beliefs and behaviours and how these impact others
5. A deeper understanding and appreciation of individual differences and how these can be used for innovation and improved effectiveness rather than sources of tension and conflict.
6. A capability to reflect as a team and learn from their own experience.
7. The resolution of team issues related to trust, communication, alignment and cooperation.
8. A fun, memorable day that will act as a touch stone for future discussion of issues, goals and relationships

In addition to a one day experience we offer an in depth process that includes pre session interviews and a follow up session that ensures the significant learning that happens in the experiential session is translated into new behaviour and improved performance.

Our learning goals were to encourage individual accountability but share leadership, to balance people and task leadership and to look at willingness versus compliance. We also wanted to look at management as a leadership team and the behaviours that would make us more effective.

The horse environment was directly analogous to the business environment. We could see the importance of having a clear goal versus being willy-nilly. You need to have a clear vision with the right balance of authority. We saw this together and we were able to translate it.

One thing that is different now is how team decisions, roles and authority are handled. We are clear now about when input is needed and where we want the team to make decisions. With the horse, we were given a task and had to figure out how to do it as a team. We learned about our own strategies for operation and learned to work together a lot better. It was really a team renewal. We met some pretty lofty goals. It was a lot of fun but also lots of learning

Why We Work With Horses

Horses provide real-time, unfiltered and unbiased feedback on your ability to communicate effectively, respond in-the-moment to their needs, be self-aware of the non-verbal messages you are sending, listen to their feedback, provide clear direction and build a partnership with them based on mutual trust and respect. This experience offers you direct insight into the essence of authentic leadership and high performance teamwork.

Horses Respond to Effective Leadership

- The survival of the herd is based on strong, authentic and trust-worthy leadership – horses have evolved as “leadership barometers” – constantly testing for leadership strengths.

Horses Provide Instant Feedback

- Horse’s herd instincts allow them to reflect our patterns of behavior, thought, perceptions and performance in a thousand pounds of visual imagery.

Horses Respond to Effective Teamwork

- Horses are experts in “team dynamics”. The horse will exploit any perceived weakness in a team – but once the team starts to work effectively the horses behaviour will instantly change.



Quotes from clients:

“The most important lesson for participants is that they need to build a relationship with the horse deliberately – the individual has to overcome some measure of anxiety, learn about another’s realities, patiently develop a trust level and then find sufficient self control and self discipline to be able to transfer influence. “

“Confronting a 1000 pound horse can be intimidating and so making progress in building a working relationship with that horse is convincing evidence that the participant is doing something right. The horses have no political agenda and so the lessons are crystal clear and the outcomes are incontrovertible.”

“ With the horse, since they have no verbal skills, we are forced to pay attention to both their body language and our own. We tend to think of verbal as being 100% of our communication, but of course much of it is really body language and the context. This program makes you realize how unaware we are of the subtleties. “

“Because you’re learning with horses, there is a greater opportunity for breakthrough. Everyone is doing this for the first time together, so you feel more able to experiment and more open to new ideas. I thought I knew horses pretty well, but I learned so much – you don’t know what you don’t know.”

“We learned to lead the horse without whips, reins or lead ropes. On the job, that’s about making authentic connections with people – then they will follow you. Horses and people know when you are being authentic.



Frequently asked questions

What should I wear?

Your program location is a working horse farm – the best clothes are casual, comfortable and weather appropriate – dark colours are better (horses seem to love to rub on white shirts!), and layer your clothes to warm up or cool down. Dress as if you would be spending the day outdoors – but make sure you can take a layer off if necessary. Sturdy shoes or boots are very important –make sure they are shoes that can get dirty.

What if the weather is bad?

The horse program will be held in an unheated indoor arena - dress for the temperature but don't worry about wind or rain. There is a comfortable meeting room inside the arena that we can use for debriefs, breaks and lunch.

I am afraid of horses – can I still participate?

Absolutely. All contact with horses is optional – you can still play a full active role in all exercises without putting yourself in a position that feels uncomfortable. You will never be forced to interact with a horse. Past participants with fears around horses have often overcome those fears during our program.

Does the program harm or exploit horses in any way?

Our horses comfort and safety are of key importance to us. If horses are worried or stressed they cannot provide the feedback that our program is dependent upon. Our horses are kept in very special natural housing to ensure they are only reacting to the participants and not to the environment.

What if I have an allergy to horses?

Ask your doctor for a recommendation. We do have masks that you can wear and if you doctor may suggest you take an antihistamine before you arrive.

Can you accommodate the differently abled?

Yes – our meeting facility is fully accessible, and our horses are comfortable with mobility aids and vision impairments – ask us about your specific situation.

Will I be riding a horse?

Most of the exercises you will be participating in are “unmounted” where you interact with horses from the ground. A few members of your team will have an opportunity to volunteer for a short ride but no one needs to ride a horse – or come in contact with a horse – unless they want to.



What if someone has a fear of horses?

You will never be asked to do anything with a horse that you are not comfortable with.

You can still fully participate in the program without directly interacting with a horse.

In every group of people coming to a Horse Sense program there will be one or more participants with a fear of horses - it certainly makes sense to be cautious of an animal that weight over a thousand pounds!

First and foremost it is important to remember that an individual can fully participate in our program without ever even leaving the meeting room! We have windows that open onto the horse arena and participants who choose may take an “observational” role – providing feedback to the participants directly engaging with the horses.

Should you choose to interact with the horses you will be doing so under the careful eye of one of our equine specialists.

The horses we use in the program are specially trained to interact with all kinds of people in all kinds of situations – they go through special training so that they are comfortable with large groups of people and lots of activity. They love having their pictures taken!

Fear of horses is usually the result of miscommunication – people interpreting horse behaviour without understanding the equine mind. Once you begin to understand them and work with them most fears will diminish.

We find it very interesting that often the people who are the most enthusiastic about the program at the end of the day were the same people who came in with concerns about horses – and the lessons the whole group gets about how a simple misunderstanding can lead to fear and conflict are very applicable back at the office.

Becoming comfortable around horses is not the focus of the session – but it is a nice bonus.





Participative Designs Inc

Participative Designs maximizes organizational effectiveness through offering a range of leadership training, team development and employee engagement programs. We specialize in experiential and transformational learning experiences help organizations to implement organizational changes, align across functions and business units, develop shared leadership and achieve a high performance team culture.

Sharon Quarrington

Sharon is both an experienced organization development professional and a skilled “horse whisperer”. Sharon works with businesses and individuals to improve communication processes, to cultivate team-building and leadership skills, and to craft conflict resolution strategies.



Sharon developed the Horse Sense programs, offered by Participative Designs Inc. These revolutionary programs utilize the universal principles of horsemanship to promote learning, refine relationship skills, and deepen understanding of leadership presence.

Sharon has an extensive background in the design and delivery of management training programs in the areas of organizational change and innovation, leadership, human relations, group dynamics, management, organization design, appreciative inquiry, polarity analysis, organizational learning and organizational culture

Bruce Craig,



Bruce is a senior consultant, trainer and facilitator. He has worked with a wide range of public and private sector organizations to train leaders, facilitate meetings, implement changes and build healthy work environments. He has been designing and delivering custom leadership and performance improvement programs for over 25 years.

Bruce has trained front-line leaders, implemented employee involvement and continuous improvement programs, conducted team building sessions and facilitated a wide range of strategic planning and change implementation sessions. Unique in his approach to organizational and cultural change is his use of "whole systems" methodologies as the basis for involving a "critical mass" of those impacted by a change. The results have been faster, more effective implementation of changes and improvements.



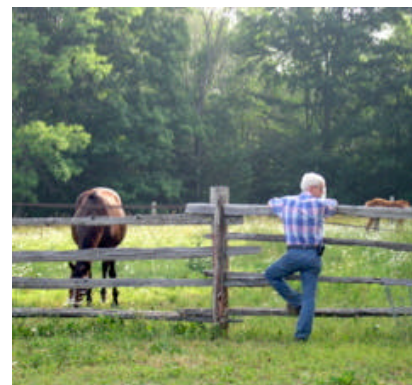
Facilities

The Horse Sense Leadership Centre is dedicated exclusively to horse enhanced accelerated learning. HSLC integrates cutting-edge research with innovative training, coaching, assessment and publishing to create proven impact for leaders, teams and organizations.

We have a fully accessible heated meeting room, comfortable indoor washroom facilities, seating for up to 25 people and a covered indoor arena for the horse exercises.

While we specialize in small group (6 to 16) intensive experiences with special arrangements we can accommodate groups of up to 60.

To provide truly international service we offer our programs through a select group of like minded facilities in Calgary, Halifax, Victoria, Pittsburg and Michigan and are in the process of selecting sites in Collingwood and King City.



Location

Horse Sense Leadership Centre

Birch Haven Farm
129 Mountsberg Road
Campbellville, ON
L0P 1B0

We are located within easy driving distance of anywhere in the GTA:

- ⇒ 45 minutes west of Toronto.
- ⇒ 30 min west of Mississauga
- ⇒ 20 min west of Burlington
- ⇒ 30 min east of Kitchener
- ⇒ 20 min north of Hamilton
- ⇒ 20 min south of Guelph

Phone: 905 659 5556

Email: info@horsesense.ca

Driving directions are on the website

