



## **Poll Finds North American Executives Overrate Their Leadership Skills**

**Toronto, ON and Vancouver, BC – May 12, 2008** – A new Refinery Leadership Partners Inc. / Ipsos Reid poll reveals that top executives at some of North America’s largest companies have an unrealistic perception of their leadership skills.

Of the 151 American and Canadian executives (including CEOs, COOs and CFOs\*) at companies employing more than 1,000 people worldwide, the poll shows that:

- 74 per cent consider their overall performance as a leader to be better than that of other executives in their industry
- 89 per cent say they are doing better than others when it comes to “willingness to collaborate with others on their team”
- 79 per cent say they are doing better than others when it comes to demonstrating “awareness of the issues and challenges facing their employees” and
- 64 per cent consider their “commitment to their own leadership development” to be better than other executives.

“These numbers are indicative of the attitudes of the traditional leader who is out of touch with their own leadership abilities,” says Dr. Rosie Steeves, principal with the Refinery Leadership Partners Inc.

“Clearly not everyone can be performing better than everyone else,” says Dr. Steeves. “This study shows that today’s leaders are not aware of how well they are performing among their peers and they are not effectively using their time to become better leaders.”

The Refinery Leadership Partners help major corporations effectively compete and thrive in today’s complex and diverse competitive marketplace. By developing strong leadership teams and systems, The Refinery has helped transform major corporate clients like Goldcorp, Cameco Corporation and Toyota de Puerto Rico.



“The best leaders recognize the collective group as part of the decision-making process. As such, they are open, communicative, vulnerable and inclusive in their behaviour,” says Dr. Steeves. “An out-of-touch executive is going to significantly impact employees’ attitudes and ultimately the bottom line,” she adds.

“The quest for the organization with a purpose – be it sustainable, environmental or innovative – combined with the workplace expectations among the next generation mean that today’s leaders must be more collaborative in the process of decision-making.”

When asked about their own leadership training in the past twelve months, the executives talked about attending seminars, conferences, reading books and other self-help activities. Their participation in training that is known to be considerably more effective, such as mentoring, coaching or completing assessments was much lower. They put the greatest priority on leadership development for their managers and the company’s executive team and the lowest priority on their own leadership development.

“This is a concern,” suggest Dr. Steeves. “We know a lot about how best to develop leaders and the activities that executives are taking part in do little to change little behaviour. While the development of managers in organizations is important, visible and effective executive leadership development is critical.”

Executives list the following:

- 82 per cent say that leadership development for their managers is a priority
- 71 per cent say that leadership development for their company’s executive team is a priority
- 61 per cent say that leadership development for themselves is a priority
- 89 per cent indicate they have participated in leadership development activities in the past twelve months
- Of those who have participated in leadership development activities in the past twelve months:
  - o 57 per cent attended seminars, conferences and meetings
  - o 19 per cent read books, magazines and newspapers
  - o 14 per cent participated in mentoring/coaching
  - o 5 per cent performed a 360-degree assessment



For a summary of the study, please visit [www.refineryleadership.com](http://www.refineryleadership.com). [Ed. Note: For copies of the white paper or the full report, please contact the PR contact, listed below.]

[Ed. Note: Coming in Autumn 2008: The Refinery Leadership Partners / Ipsos Reid survey response from upper to mid-level executives and staff to top executive's perceptions. Please advise PR contact, listed below, if you wish to receive notification of the second part of the survey poll.]

**Ends**

### **About the survey**

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid survey conducted on behalf of The Refinery Leadership Partners from January 3 to February 22, 2008. For the survey, 151 telephone interviews of 67 Canadian and 84 American senior-level business executives were conducted. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 8$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

### **About The Refinery Leadership Partners**

The Refinery Leadership Partners Inc. builds strong leaders and leadership systems so that organizations can effectively create and manage growth. They help to accelerate companies' strategies to create positive, healthy and sustainable change. Clients include multinational organizations, non-profits, and governmental organizations of all sizes.

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\*CEO – Chief Executive Officer  
COO – Chief Operating Officer  
CFO – Chief Financial Officer