

Rebuilding Trust at Scale: How Air Canada Restored Manager-Employee Relationships Across a Complex Operational Workforce



COMPANY OVERVIEW

- **Industry:**
Airline and commercial aviation
- **Scale:**
6,000+ leaders engaged across all levels
- **Scope:**
Three tailored to the organization programs spanning operations, corporate, inflight, and pilots
- **Duration:**
Four-year partnership
- **Region:**
Canada
- **Workforce context:**
Unionized operations across multiple employee groups

THE CHALLENGE:

When Air Canada moved from crown corporation to publicly traded entity, the commercial pressure changed overnight . and the relationships needed to carry that pressure had already frayed. Leaders were managing four distinct unionized workforce groups, and the gap between how leaders knew they needed to show up and how they actually performed in high-stakes daily interactions was wide enough to threaten both operational stability and labour relations.

THE SOLUTION

- Eagle's Flight designed three tailored to the organization programs, each built around the specific relational dynamics between managers and frontline unionized employees in that part of the operation.
- Programs were sequenced deliberately across four years to open, restore, and then strengthen working relationships rather than address symptoms in isolation.
- Delivery reached all four workforce groups: operations, corporate, inflight, and pilots, ensuring no group operated under a different set of norms or expectations.
- Every program was built from the inside out, grounded in Air Canada's specific culture, history, and labour landscape rather than adapted from a generic leadership curriculum.
- The work was sustained across the full four-year arc, reinforcing behavior change rather than treating a single intervention as sufficient.

THE RESULTS:

- 6,000+ leaders participated across all levels and functions over the four-year engagement.
- Measurable improvement recorded in both employee engagement scores and manager-employee relationship scores.
- Ten collective agreements signed to unprecedented durations, a direct indicator that trust had been rebuilt at a level that translated into labour stability.

KEY METRICS:

- 6,000+ leaders engaged
- Measurable improvement in employee engagement scores
- Measurable improvement in manager-employee relationship scores
- Ten collective agreements signed to unprecedented durations
- Four-year partnership duration
- Three tailored to the organization programs delivered