

Consistency Across 2,200 Restaurants: How Tim Hortons Made Leadership Standards Real at the Store Level



COMPANY OVERVIEW

- **Industry:**
Quick service restaurant, franchise network
- **Scale:**
2,200 owner-operated restaurants, 15,000+ employees from owners to in-restaurant leadership
- **Scope:**
Enterprise-wide leadership development across full franchise system
- **Duration:**
6-day leadership journey delivered over 10 months, with reinforcement every six weeks
- **Region:**
North America (bilingual delivery)
- **Facilitators deployed:** 30 dedicated facilitators hired, trained, and deployed

"Phil and Eagle's Flight have been a go-to resource over three decades for improving leader skills and driving culture transformation."

THE CHALLENGE:

Guest experience, employee engagement, and profitability at Tim Hortons all came down to decisions made under pressure by operators and in-restaurant leaders across 2,200 owner-operated locations. Standards existed. Whether those standards showed up in daily behavior depended entirely on the individual running each store. That kind of variability could not be fixed by adding another policy to the system.

THE SOLUTION

- Three months of in-field restaurant and industry research, with findings presented directly to the CEO, COO, and Ownership Committee, grounding the program in operational reality before a single session was designed.
- A prelaunch Owner's Conference to align franchise owners on the leadership direction and build investment before rollout began.
- A six-day leadership journey built around 24 key leadership principles, delivered one day every six weeks to allow application between sessions rather than front-loading information.
- 30 dedicated facilitators hired, trained, and deployed to deliver consistently across the full network, with bilingual support and online registration, portal access, and Q&A communities.
- Reinforcement built into the cadence every six weeks, supported by knowledge retention activities and best practice communities to sustain behavior beyond the training room.

THE RESULTS:

- 95,000 training days delivered within 10 months across the franchise network.
- Stronger alignment across owners, operators, and in-restaurant leadership on shared leadership expectations.
- More consistent execution at the store level, with improved guest experience and operational performance.
- A shared leadership approach established across the full system, replacing reliance on individual operator quality.

KEY METRICS:

- 95,000 training days delivered within 10 months
- 2,200 owner-operated restaurants reached
- 15,000+ employees from owners to in-restaurant leadership
- 30 dedicated facilitators deployed
- 6-day leadership journey across 10 months
- 3 months of in-field research conducted prior to design