

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL (BLPIHC) - COHORT 13

Program Format

Three Modules: Two at the [University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management](#) & One Virtual

- Module 1: September 26 – 28, 2025 - **In-person**
- Module 2: February 2, 5, 9, 12, 17 & 19, 2026 - **Virtual**
- Module 3: May 1 – 3, 2026 - **In-person**

Self-Directed Online Module: September 2025 - May 2026 (self-paced component)

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|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| • Governance | • Insurance | • Mergers and | • Regulatory Compliance |
| • Employment | • Privacy | Acquisitions | • Risk Management |
| • Business | • Intellectual Property | • Insolvency | |
| Communications | | | |

Team Presentation: April/May 2026

Students will be divided into teams and will work on a selected topic throughout the program.

Final Written Assessment: May/June 2026

The assessment includes four questions. Students select three of the four to respond. This is an open book exercise that tests students' ability to apply what they have learned to the scenarios with which they are presented.

Final Oral Interview Assessment: June 2026

A 30-40 minute question/answer discussion to assess how students will apply the learnings. All assessors are CIC.C alumni.

Program Overview

The BLPIHC is a 10-month program consisting of three modules - two in-person and one virtual - combined with a self-paced online component. The in-person modules, 1 & 3, consist of three full days of in-class learning. Module 2 is delivered via Zoom as six half-day live sessions.

Students will spend approximately 3-5 hours of pre-work/readings for each module. The self-directed online component is comprised of readings on 10 substantive law topics. Students may spend 3-8 hours on each, depending on prior knowledge and experience.

This program is delivered by Rotman School of Management faculty, led by Academic Director, Professor Brian Silverman.

Through the use of case studies, hands-on exercises, group activities, guest speakers and faculty engagement, it is a safe space and forum for discussion of relevant issues. The case studies and group projects are specifically curated to engage critical thought processes that lead to solutions to ongoing challenges faced by in-house counsel with real-time applicability.

SESSION OUTLINES FOR ALL MODULES

MODULE 1 – approx. 24 hours

SESSION OUTLINE: Nature of the General Counsel Role

Summary:

The program begins with an opportunity to hear from an experienced General Counsel regarding the nature of the GC role and the evolution of the role of in-house counsel in general. The session will begin with an interview of the GC by the program's Academic Director, followed by an opportunity for all participants to put questions to the guest GC.

Objectives:

- Learn about the nature and evolution of the role of General Counsel
- Gain insights from an experienced General Counsel regarding changes that have occurred in the role, responsibilities and expectations of in-house counsel
- Develop a wider context and appreciation for the in-house counsel role

SESSION OUTLINE: Strategy and Competitive Advantage

Summary:

The Strategy and Competitive Advantage session of the program will introduce participants to the basic concepts, frameworks and vocabulary used by managers in crafting and executing business strategy. The session will begin with the fundamental question of "What is Strategy" and then go on to explore the conditions that enable managers to conceive, develop, and implement strategies that lead their companies to consistently outperform their peers.

The session will discuss the key ideas introduced in Michael Porter's well-known "What is Strategy" article and guide participants through the application and synthesis of these ideas using the Tim Hortons and LEGO cases. In discussing Tim Hortons, we will try to uncover what strategy allowed Tim Hortons to carve out a profitable position in the quick-service restaurant industry. We will then examine whether this strategy, and the concomitant competitive advantage, will "travel" well to other settings – in other words, how might Tim Hortons pursue growth given its strategy and competitive advantage? Through the LEGO case, we will evaluate how strategy can be important in crisis situations, which will allow us to examine strategy in an evolving environment, and the risks to firms when industry change occurs. We will also devote time to considering effective strategic decision-making processes.

Objectives:

The overall goal of the session is to expose you to the basic questions and issues that organizations grapple with when defining, refining and implementing their strategy and, in doing so, make you a more valuable and well-rounded member of your organization.

SESSION OUTLINE: Navigating the Challenges of Management & Leadership

Summary:

This double session gives us the opportunity to explore a number of the challenges faced by managers in organizations. The session is built around the case of Erik Peterson, a newly-minted MBA who tackles his first leadership assignment in a pharmaceutical company. We will explore Erik Peterson's story and diagnose some of the root causes for his leadership performance. To that end, we will further discuss issues such as the challenges of becoming a leader, how to manage your boss and how the realities of organizational life often present unanticipated challenges and obstacles to our success.

Objectives:

- Understand some of the key challenges associated with taking on a new leadership role
- Gain an appreciation for the importance of managing up (your boss) and across (your peers) as well as managing down (your subordinates)

MODULE 1 – *cont'd*

SESSION OUTLINE: Organizational Culture

Summary:

It's common to hear people talk about organizational culture. Almost all of us use the term and most of us feel that we have an intuitive understanding of what it means. However, getting to a clear definition of culture and agreeing on a common set of dimensions to describe and measure culture is more challenging. In this session, we will focus in on the concept of organizational culture and attempt to: a) arrive at a common language for talking about culture; and b) gain some insights into the factors that shape the culture of an organization.

It will help us appreciate why cultural change almost always results from a variety of changes in people, practices, processes and structures which mutually reinforce one another in order bring about a new culture over a period of time.

Objectives:

- Gain a clearer understanding of the nature of organizational culture and its impact on organizational effectiveness
- Develop insights regarding the factors that shape and determine organizational culture
- Recognize that culture may differ across organizational subunits in ways that may be quite appropriate and desirable
- Recognize the challenges associated with attempting to change organizational culture

SESSION OUTLINE: Managerial Negotiations: Two-party Distributive / Integrative Bargaining

Summary:

Negotiation is an important means by which problems are solved, agreements are reached, resources are allocated, and decisions are made in organizations. In this interactive session, we will reflect on what it means to be an effective managerial negotiator, and how one does it.

Agenda:

Participants will engage in a two-party, multi-issue negotiation exercise and will receive feedback about how well they did across a number of dimensions of managerial negotiation effectiveness. Exposure to this feedback provides participants with an opportunity to become even more effective at this key leadership skill.

SESSION OUTLINE: Team Decision Making and Negotiation Planning and Preparation

Summary:

In-house counsel frequently participate in the making of high-stakes decisions under uncertainty. In this session, we will discuss some of the obstacles to effective decision making in this context, many of which are rooted in psychology and group dynamics. We will also discuss how to effectively facilitate and manage the task of making high quality group judgments under uncertainty.

Agenda:

The objectives of this session are: (1) enhance participants' ability to make high-quality choices as both an individual and as a member of the strategic decision making group; and (2) increase participants' understanding of the link between decision making processes and outcomes.

SESSION OUTLINE: Multi-party Negotiations: Consensus Building in Organizations

Summary:

In-house counsel are often required to forge a consensus when none exists at the outset and in the absence of any formal authority over others. In this session, we will examine some of the challenges associated with attempting to bring individuals with diverse perspectives and aspirations into some form of alignment and consensus. In this session, we will explore the consensus building process as an exercise in leadership as well as multiparty, and frequently multi-issue, negotiation.

Agenda:

In this session, participants will conduct a six-party negotiation/decision-making exercise, and then reflect on the results with the view to achieving even better outcomes from such processes in the future.

MODULE 2 - approx. 24 hours

SESSION OUTLINE: Financial Literacy: Linking Decision Making and the Financial Realm

Summary:

The start of the session, in essence, will be a guided tour of the financial statements. As such, we will look at the balance sheet, income statement, retained earnings statement, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements.

The session will also involve a case on financial statements and their use. The case requires students to prepare a full set of financial statements and, even more importantly, to use these statements to make decisions. As such, the case will help us understand the relationship among financial reporting, performance evaluation, and strategy.

Objectives:

- Gain understanding of the structure and contents of financial statements
- Enhance the ability of participants to be able to use the financial statements in strategic decision making

SESSION OUTLINE: Communication & Influence

Summary:

Whether your communication is formal or informal, spoken or written, to one investor or a hundred, you will learn how to craft a persuasive and powerful message – one that shifts attitudes and sparks action.

This session will help you create powerful messages for any type of critical situation whether that be:

- Seeking approval for a set of recommendations in a critical meeting
- Meeting with the executive team or Board with the goal of securing buy-in
- Gaining the support of diverse stakeholders for an important new initiative
- Looking to get critical input from others in a timely manner
- Changing long-standing behaviours of team members or other employees
- Inspiring your employees to live the values of your organization
- Trying to get others to act on strategic insights uncovered in your analysis

Objectives:

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Define the result, the target audience, and any important secondary audiences for the message
- State the central point clearly
- Organize the flow of ideas so the central point is strongly supported
- Provide the right amount of supporting information that is relevant to your audience
- Determine the important decision-making drivers influencing your audience
- Establish credibility around key decision-making drivers
- Anticipate any constraints influencing your audience and overcome possible objections, resistance, or competing messages

MODULE 2 - *cont'd*

SESSION OUTLINE: Overcoming Key Challenges in Managing Career Transitions

Summary:

During the course of our careers we all occupy a number of different roles, and most of us do so in more than one organization. Each transition represents a pivotal point in our careers, and learning to handle these transitions effectively significantly impacts our overall career growth and development. The initial period in any new role is simultaneously a time of great opportunity and significant risk. It is when we establish key relationships, shape how others perceive us, set and communicate vision and objectives for ourselves and our teams, and so on. Learning to manage career transitions effectively is an important skill, and one that we can develop through learning, reflection and practice.

Objectives:

- Appreciate both the pitfalls and opportunities associated with role transitions
- Learn how to analyze the demands of a new work situation in order to develop a successful approach to the transition period
- Learn about the most common “traps” in transition and how to avoid or overcome them
- Gain insights regarding effectively coping with the major changes associated with the initial transition into a role involving managing and leading others

SESSION OUTLINE: Effective Delegation and Motivation: Building a Strong Team

Summary:

The case we will be using in this session, while long, more than repays the time invested in preparation. The case brings to light ways in which an effective leader can develop a very high performing team by focusing on achieving coordination and integration among:

- Selecting the right types of people (and developing the skills to assess whether people are the “right type”)
- Structuring roles that challenge and engage people
- Building a strong sense of collaboration among team members
- Creating conditions where it is possible to delegate significant responsibility and authority to team members

Objectives:

- Understand some of the key leadership skills required in order to build a strong team
- Appreciate the significant power that can be unleashed when significant responsibility can be delegated to highly motivated and appropriately skilled team members
- Understand the importance of structuring roles in ways that provide individuals with opportunities for personal growth and development, as well as significant scope for exercising personal initiative

SESSION OUTLINE: Managing Individual Performance

Summary:

One of the key responsibilities of every manager is managing the performance of direct reports. How do you motivate, set goals, and provide feedback to individuals in a way which will maximize the performance of each individual, while at the same time building a culture of teamwork and collaboration that will draw the best out of your entire team? This session permits us to focus on some of the challenges associated with the effective discharge of these key managerial responsibilities, and also highlights some of the difficult trade-offs that often arise.

Objectives:

- Appreciate some of the challenges of simultaneously motivating and rewarding strong individual performance while simultaneously building a culture of collaboration and teamwork
- Learn about some of the tough trade-offs that leaders must make in managing their direct reports
- Develop insights into effective and ineffective ways of delivering tough feedback to valuable employees

SESSION OUTLINE: Cultural Fluency

Summary:

Inclusive leadership matters deeply to organizations because it represents its values at the level of organizational routines and interpersonal practices.

Cultural fluency is a capability that can be learned through a practice-based approach. It starts with cultural awareness, followed by developing a deeper cultural understanding of how norms vary, and ultimately resulting in the development of skills that enable leadership across differences by utilizing tools for a deeper exchange.

The concepts and content of this session are delivered so that learners can develop the practical skills that enable more purposeful and inclusive leadership at the individual, interpersonal and community levels.

SESSION OUTLINE: The Role of the General Counsel

Summary:

The overall objective of this module is to provide insights and practical tips on how lawyers can evolve into or grow in their role as General Counsel and improve the value and effectiveness of legal departments. Participants will discuss and explore the evolving role of General Counsel in the context of becoming a key influencer and member of an Executive team. Participants will learn about planning / building an effective legal department and the key traits of effective General Counsel as company leaders. As well, participants will have the chance to meet and ask questions of a small panel who will share practical tips and real-life experience.

Agenda:

- The role of the GC as a lawyer and department leader (instructor led)
- The role of the GC as an executive and business leader (instructor led)
- Practical tips and thoughts on how to build to a GC role (panel, Q+A)

SESSION OUTLINE: Risk Management

Summary:

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) is a decision support system that helps organizations understand risk and assure the achievement of their goals. In-house counsel play an integral role in an organization's ERM effort, from identifying risk and assisting in the design and implementation of risk response solutions. This module is intended to provide a high level understanding of what risk is and what an ERM process looks like for organizations, including some common challenges and pitfalls of institutionalizing an ERM culture.

This module will focus on each step of the ERM process and will include an opportunity for participants to review the online assessment you each prepared of your organization's risk management capabilities and maturity.

SESSION OUTLINE: Data and Judgment in Strategic Decision-making

Summary:

This session will introduce participants to a systematic approach for effective decision-making when dealing with complex strategic choices. In the first part of the session, participants will apply the approach to a strategic problem through a series of breakout and all-class exercises. A key outcome of this approach is an understanding of what data is necessary to make an effective decision. In the second part of the session, we will discuss the ways that data can be collected and analyzed to inform such decisions.

Objectives:

The overall goal of the session is to expose you to an effective process of making strategic choices, and, in doing so, make you a more valuable strategic contributor to your organization.