

BUILD A BETTER MAINE

**DEVELOPING EMERGING LEADERS,
CREATING LASTING IMPACT**

2026 Program



Across all fields and areas of study and practice, leadership is a critical component that distinguishes high-performing companies from their average-performing peers. While leadership development happens within many organizations, there are significant benefits when individuals are developed in an environment encompassing diverse perspectives and experiences.

The **Build a Better Maine** program works with individuals from 8-12 Maine companies from various backgrounds. It provides a unique opportunity for participants to learn (instead of being taught*) leadership competencies through classroom discussions, mastermind sessions, and strategic networking.

Program Goals

1. Empower high-impact leaders to drive organizational success
2. Enhance networks of up-and-coming leaders across major employers in Maine
3. Develop an alumni network of participants committed to leading in Maine organizations
4. Connect participants more deeply in Maine to retain talent
5. Create lasting impact across organizations and communities

*Allio, R.J. (2005), "Leadership development: teaching versus learning", Management Decision, Vol. 43 No. 7/8, pp. 1071-1077. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740510610071>

Leaders need to meet with like-minded individuals so they can experience being influenced and supported by other business owners dedicated to leveling up. These meetings provide a place and time where people can share dreams and goals, reconcile fears, make life-changing decisions, and celebrate wins. As this happens, true human connection occurs, which is where the magic in business happens.

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Program Outline

Build a Better Maine is an accelerated leadership development initiative that engages up-and-coming Maine business leaders across organizational boundaries. The program focuses on developing leadership skills and building peer networks to strengthen connections between individuals and across organizations. This selective program is an investment in the next generation of Maine business leaders and offers a unique growth opportunity for the state's brightest professionals. Drawing on the expertise of the Maine Business School, Maine Center, and leading industry professionals, **Build A Better Maine** delivers a truly dynamic and impactful learning experience.

Length of program	4 months (March-June)
Cost	\$5,000/ participant
Cohort Size	8-12

Target participant

- Identified as talent on the rise
- An emerging leader
- Has core management skills
- Senior manager or director level (may vary by company)

Program elements

1. Four full-day, in-person cohort meetings led by the Maine Center and Maine Business School, with materials provided in advance to maximize learning.
2. Presentations and discussions with distinguished guest speakers and subject matter experts from academia and industry
3. Mastermind sessions, guided reflection, and facilitated discussions on leadership challenges
4. Scheduled peer-to-peer meetings between sessions to expand professional connections and practice effective networking

Draft Session Agendas

Session 1 – March 24, 2026

- Kick off the program with remarks from a recognized leader and organizational leaders
- Icebreaker session to build trust and confidence within the group
- Initial personality and leadership assessment with coaching
- Overview of the program: its goals, process, expectation setting, and introduction to leadership roadmap
- *Lunch*
- Introduction of leadership characteristic #1 – Self-awareness
- Mastermind session: peer mentoring on leadership issues related to topic #1
- Networking reception with program alumni

Session 3 – May 12, 2026

- In-gathering and sharing of reflections since last meeting
- Mastermind session: project development and leadership challenges
- Introduction of leadership characteristic #4 – Cultivating and maintaining relationships + delegation
- *Lunch*
- Introduction of leadership characteristic #5 – Resilience and persistence
- Mastermind session: peer mentoring on leadership issues related to topics 4 & 5
- Articulation of goals/next steps for next meeting

Session 2 – April 14, 2026

- In-gathering and sharing of reflections since last meeting
- Mastermind session: Utilizing effective communication as a leadership tool
- Introduction of leadership characteristic #2 – Learning agility
- *Lunch*
- Introduction of leadership characteristic #3 – Ethical leadership in decision making
- Mastermind session: peer mentoring on leadership issues related to topics 2 & 3
- Articulation of goals/next steps for next meeting

Session 4 – June 9, 2026

- In-gathering and sharing of reflections since last meeting
- Mastermind session: leadership challenges and lessons
- Introduction of leadership characteristic #6 – Empathy
- *Lunch*
- Mastermind session: decision making as a leadership competency
- *Closing reception with employer sponsors, distinguished guests, and program alumni*

Potential Topics Include



1 Ethical decision making

2 Effective communication

3 Conflict management

4 Inspiring & motivating others
(rewarding & recognizing)

5 Delegation & empowerment

6 Promoting effective decisions
making

7 Promoting innovative thinking

8 Building employee
engagement

9 Understanding a systems
approach

10 AI and leadership

11 Listening strategies

12 Performance feedback

13 Mentoring & coaching

Program & Participant Assessment Activities



We assess the effectiveness of the Build a Better Maine program by evaluating participants on the following:

1. Development of a five-year leadership roadmap inclusive of activities/goals
2. Leadership skills assessment
3. Network mapping of participants
4. Track the career path of participants at six months, one year, two years, and five years post completion

Past Participant Organizations:



Program Leadership



Jason Harkins, Ph.D.

Executive Dean, Maine Business School &
Graduate School of Business

Expertise in strategy, entrepreneurship and
leadership. Founder of Scratchpad
Accelerator.



Seth Goodall

CEO of Maine Center Ventures &
Executive Director of the Maine Center

Expertise in leadership, public policy, and
business development.

Past Subject Matter Experts

- Billy Obenauer, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Management, Maine Business School
- Buffie McCue-Quinn, Ph.D. – Lecturer in Management and Marketing
- Melanie Tinto, Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, W.W. Grainger, Inc.
- Owen McCarthy, President and Co-founder, MedRhythms
- Patti Miles, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Business and Professor of Management, Maine Business School
- Ryan Low, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Strategic AI Integration & Treasurer, University of Maine System
- Samantha Warren, Chief External and Governmental Affairs Officer, University of Maine System

Thank You

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