



Second-in-command: Paul Simmonds, left, owner of Robert Simonds Clothing in Fredericton talks with his manager Robyn Stevenson about business sales Friday afternoon. Stevenson is a graduate of the 2iC program put on by the Wallace McCain Institute. *James West/The Daily Gleaner*

[Second-in-command course open](#)

Ethan Lou
Telegraph-Journal
24 Jul 2013 09:55AM

CEOs and their deputies have until Thursday to apply for the Wallace McCain Institute's 2iC program, one tailored to mold a strong right hand for emerging business leaders.

Originally a British military term, 2iC stands for "second-in-command," and in this case, it refers usually to a chief operating officer or general manager.

The nine-month program features a series of half-day workshops designed to help entrepreneurs bring out the most out of their second-in-command.

Although the CEO is to apply with the attendee – and in some cases, nominates the deputy for the course – the company's head does not attend.

The institute's executive director Nancy Mathis said a good deputy is important as CEOs are usually more outward-facing, dealing with investors and clients.

"They need a person who is able to translate their vision, their dreams into things that can be executed on by the people in the company," she said.

“The second-in-command has a really important role. At one point in their jobs, they are translating what their CEO is saying and making them understandable in the work plans and the day-to-day activities.”

The program takes a maximum of 16 people and features nine day-and-a-half sessions held in Upper Oxbow outside Miramichi. Its content comes equally from external speakers and participants and moderators.

The participants will be paired up and after each session – which includes themes like marketing, selling, money and leadership – come up with a 30-day goal for the next time the group meets.

As a result of the pairing up, said Mathis, the program leans toward taking an even number of participants, whose numbers are to be whittled down after an interview to be held in August.

The applicants fluctuate year-to-year, she added, there were about 30 last year, the first time the program was open to the public.

Mathis said the program looks for CEO-and-deputy pairs – they are both interviewed at the same time – that are aligned in vision and initiatives.

Once the program begins, the CEO will be updated every month on what happens on the meetings.

“Each CEO has a one-to-one coaching session with our executive-in-residence, where our executive visits them at their office and helps them incorporate the growth of the 2iC in the most positive way,” Mathis added.

The business manager of the Fredericton-based clothing chain Robert Simmonds Inc., Robyn Stevenson, who attended the program last year, said the wide range of industries the attendees hail from makes for an invaluable experience.

“We all go through similar situations, whether it’s with staffing or marketing,” she said. “There might be people in the trucking industry – it isn’t the same as retail – but we are able to learn things and see how people do things differently.”

Stevenson, who has been with her firm for seven years, added her experience also resulted in tight connections with other members of the business community.

“There was peer coaching in different things,” she said. “You get to meet the small groups of people and become friends after that, and hopefully, in the years to come, we’ll keep in contact and reach out if we need anything.”

Stevenson was recommended to the program by the firm’s founder, Paul Simmonds, who attended a separate Entrepreneurial Leaders Program for chief executives.

The 2iC program costs \$5,000 plus tax. More information can be found at the institute’s website.