

Betsy Thomas

CONSULTANT, COACH, FACILITATOR

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A skilled organizational development consultant with extensive experience in an international business context as well as non-profit, academic, and government organizations, I thrive in complex environments where constant change is the norm. I have a strong ability to see the big picture and understand current trends in multiple contexts. This is balanced and supported by a solid foundation in qualitative research and data analysis, and a tremendous enjoyment of facilitating rich conversations with a broad spectrum of people.

I founded and led for 3 decades a complex manufacturing company with multiple geographical locations and a focus on sustainable procurement and manufacturing. The company was rooted in the community economic development movement in Canada, and I was a leader, innovator, and early adopter of social enterprise. I grew the business into a multi-million-dollar company, with dozens of employees and hundreds of retailers.

I am an organized, personable, and adept process consultant, project manager, and change leader, with extensive training and experience in leadership development and adult learning design. I've trained, coached, and mentored many business leaders, created and worked with numerous diverse and multidisciplinary teams, negotiated international distribution and supply chain agreements, and navigated complex investment opportunities with both large institutions and individuals. I am skilled at networking people and building agreement, and over the course of my career have fostered long term, strong, and fruitful partnerships with and among many diverse stakeholders.

I hold a certificate in sustainable change, a master's degree in Human Systems Intervention, and am currently in the process of obtaining professional coaching certification.

KEY SKILLS

- Fostering long term, strong, and fruitful partnerships with and among diverse stakeholders.
- Working with different communities by prioritizing relationships and connection.
- Engaging people and putting them at ease (creating safety and trust).
- Active listening and coaching,
- Building agreement, helping people through conflicts.
- Designing and facilitating processes to engage, connect, and inform people.
- Process Consulting/organizational development/change management processes
- Qualitative research, data collection and analysis,
- Writing: reports, blogs, articles
- Business plans/strategic planning/coherent blueprints for actions

- Project management: organizational culture change projects, optimization of business and technological processes, and lots of on the ground experience leading projects such as setting up warehouses, factories, retail stores, and production operations.

BETSY THOMAS CONSULTING & COACHING

(2015 – PRESENT)

- Process Consulting
- Organizational development consulting: helping organizations evolve and thrive through creating healthier workplace cultures, improved employee engagement, and healthier group dynamics.
- Specialized focus on dialogic inquiry, diversity & inclusion, remedying difficult team dynamics and navigating conflict, facilitating change initiatives, fostering effective leadership, improving organizational structures and processes.
- Qualitative research, analysis, and reporting.
- Leadership and life coaching with a variety of diverse clients; including leaders, project managers, educators
- Research, Data Analysis, Report Writing
- Coaching

FRACTAL FACILITATION CO-FOUNDER

(2023 – 2026)

I worked on several projects with a diverse and collaborative team of both different and like-minded consultants; all trained in Human Systems Intervention.

- Process Consulting
- Coaching Circles
- Learning design
- Workshops Design & Facilitation
 - Trauma-Informed Leadership
 - Trauma-Informed Coaching
 - Responsive Leadership
 - Skills for Navigating Uncertain Times
 - BIPOC Leadership
 - Anti-racism

EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL WORK:

CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Learning design project that integrated leadership training and experience with a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) lens.

Our team redesigned a leadership development course for Black managers and Supervisors created in response to the Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service. Our goal

was to inspire systems change within the public service by grounding new and aspiring leaders in a framework of both practical and aspirational leadership and empower them to build a more human-centric and inclusive public service. It was a collaborative effort with the CSPS project team, and incorporated the experience, advice, and vision of Black leaders across Canada's public service

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY, OTTAWA

Deep level organizational diagnosis using focus groups and interviews. Data analysis, reporting, and recommendations.

This is an organization at the heart of the Federal government that was experiencing deep budget cuts and a painful reorganization. There was conflict between departments, anger at management, resistance to changes, and a deep sense of disappointment. Our team facilitated a series of conversations within teams as well as with 3 levels of management. We shared our report and recommendations with them, had discussions about what steps leadership would take to create a culture more in line with their values and conducive to more efficient collaboration and a better working environment.

COMPASSIONATE OTTAWA

Research, focus groups, data analysis, reporting and recommendations.

A project to identify the needs of seniors in retirement residences and their families concerning issues of end-of-life transitions, care, and planning, and create partnerships with residences to fulfill these needs. Designed and carried out a comprehensive and months long project of data gathering through interviews and focus groups. Conducted interviews and facilitated in-person groups of residents, family members, and staff, as well as presentations to the oversight board. The obvious need and desire of participants to talk about this subject resulted in passionate and fruitful discussions. These discussions illuminated a clear pathway for future action – both within Compassionate Ottawa and also within the residences themselves.

WORLD SKILLS EMPLOYMENT CENTRE, OTTAWA

Teambuilding, workshop design/delivery, facilitation.

Designed and facilitated all staff day with teambuilding for 125 new and returning staff on the eve of their re-entry into a post-pandemic hybrid workplace. Used very dynamic small group activity with mixed groups to get participants talking and working together toward common goals related to the organization. By the end of the day there was a collective sense of excitement about the return to work and an overall willingness to collaborate.

CANADIAN REUSABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION, OTTAWA

Teambuilding, workshop design/delivery.

Designed and facilitated unconscious bias training for staff and directors. Combined training and download of information relevant to the topic with activities and questions that explored it in relation to the organization, generating a wealth of new insights and understanding. Participants throughout all levels of the organization were able to surface and talk about very difficult and triggering subjects together.

WEST HERITAGE BUILDING PROJECT (CANADA'S SUPREME COURT), OTTAWA

Teambuilding, workshop design/delivery, facilitation.

Met with project directors over the course of several weeks to discuss and develop an initiative to improve communication within a very large and complex project. The challenge was to help create more civility and cooperation within this very diverse group of professionals working together to redesign and rebuild a heritage building in Ottawa in preparation for housing Canada's Supreme Court.

Subsequently designed and facilitated a team engagement and communication event that brought together all members of the team: staff from Public Services and Procurement Canada, an architectural firm, and a construction firm. A series of energizing and fun small group activities (integrating members of all 3 organizations) had everyone on their feet in excitement, communicating skillfully while they worked together to solve problems. In the collective debrief after these activities, it was obvious how much learning had emerged during the process.

FUTURE SEARCH: ACTION FOR DISRUPTING WHITE SUPREMACY AND RACISM IN PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEMS

Data Analysis and reporting.

Distilled, analyzed, and reported the results of this 5-day workshop: **Future Search: Action for Disrupting White Supremacy and Racism in Public Health Systems**, hosted by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute for Population and Public Health and the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health.

The workshop brought together public health researchers, policymakers, and practitioners working on the social and structural determinants of health and health equity across Canada. The challenge was to capture accurately the work done in daily discussions over 5 days in order to illuminate a collective and agreed upon path forward.

ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO MIDWIVES

Worked closely in collaboration with the Health-Care Equity, Quality and Human Rights (HEQHR) department to determine the needs and parameters of this initiative and continuously improve the work with feedback throughout the process.

We ideated, designed, and built curricula for a series of anti-racism workshops and a BIPOC leadership workshop, and designed 16 interactive learning workshops complete with workbooks and slide decks. The workshops inspired dynamic and inspiring discussions that were sometimes difficult and always respectful. The high level of engagement with each other and the material generated in participants surprising new understanding and solutions to everyday challenges.

PRIVATE CORPORATIONS, USA AND CANADA

Data analysis, organizational assessment, reporting and recommendations for resolution of difficult conflict situations within the management teams of 2 mining corporations in the USA and Canada.

Although very different organizations, these two projects were similar in that they both addressed volatile team dynamics and difficult communication within the upper management teams of these 2 very large multinational companies. In both cases, extensive interviewing was conducted, the results were analyzed and distilled into a report and recommendations for action.

ROSEMÈRE HIGH SCHOOL, MONTREAL AREA

Post-pandemic processing and teambuilding.

In consultation with the principal and team, we assessed the needs of faculty and administration regarding the post-pandemic return to school. Subsequently designed and carried out a ½ day all staff event that was playful and dynamic, with small group discussions and art-based activities. The end of the day was a deeply authentic sharing of truths and an energizing discussion with all 125 members of the school community.

BLACK THEATRE WORKSHOP, MONTREAL

Process Consulting project: organizational assessment, data collection and analysis, designed interventions, reporting and recommendations.

This project was mandated to address difficult dynamics and communication between the board, the leaders of the organization, and the staff. After having conducted interviews and discussions, several interventions were created, resulting in spirited, engaging, and ultimately very respectful and insightful conversations within the organization.

YOUTH PROTECTION AGENCY, MONTREAL

Process consulting project: organizational assessment, data collection and analysis, designed interventions, reporting and recommendations.

This was a large agency with a very high rate of turnover in social workers who felt unheard and under appreciated. Information gathered in interviews, surveys, and focus groups led to creating interventions with staff and the management team that surfaced many possible solutions and an action plan for addressing the problem. But the real highlight of this project was the sharing of truths in authentic and productive conversations between staff and management.

THE PRIORY SCHOOL, MONTREAL

Post-trauma processing and teambuilding.

This private school had experienced a traumatic disruption that greatly impacted staff and administration. In collaboration with the new administrator, a ½ day intervention was designed and facilitated that allowed space to the members of this community to process difficult emotions. The resulting conversations were healing and revitalizing, and a dynamic and fun activity at the end of the meeting left everyone laughing but also excited and connected.

WEST ISLAND CITIZEN'S ADVOCACY, MONTREAL AREA

Process consulting project: organizational assessment, data collection and analysis, designed interventions.

This organization had experienced difficult events related to past leadership, death, and the extreme and pressing needs of their client base. Interviews and conversations were conducted to determine how to intervene in order to surface difficult feelings and improve communication within the organization – both between departments, and between staff and the administration. The intervention was a ½ day all staff event that surfaced many difficult truths, and resulted in rich and fruitful conversations, many insights, and the outlines of a plan for continuing to build better communication and relationships.

CUMMINGS CENTRE, MONTREAL

Planning and assessment process, workshop design/delivery.

Designed and facilitated 2 day-long workshops to encourage a very diverse group of participants (board members, administrators, volunteers, and staff) to learn about, discuss, and practice how to fail for success. This was done in small groups with several playful activities and some more serious discussions.

COACHING

I've mentored and coached extensively: entrepreneurs, leaders, students, consultants, in organizations, and more. I love coaching for its down-to-earth way of empowering individuals and transforming mindsets. It's a way of being more than a skill. A coaching stance teaches us to approach others with curiosity and respect so that we can be truly helpful.

I was part of a seminal research project on coaching that was led by the founder of the coaching school at Concordia University, and I participated in the presentation of the results to the Internal Coaching Federation Conference. I also mentored students in the coaching intensive component of the Human Systems Intervention MA program for 6 years – helping to introduce the mindset and practice of coaching.

CENTRE D'ORIENTATION POUR LA PRÉVENTION DES AGRESSIONS (COPA) CONSULTANT (2015-2023)

- Designed, led, and carried out a 2-year strategic planning process. Over the course of this comprehensive project and its follow-up, we designed and conducted interviews with internal and external stakeholders, facilitated multiple staff meetings, board meetings, and committee meetings, and produced data analyses, resources and reports.
- Marketing and Communications
- Website Ideation and Creation
- Project Management
- Writer, Content Generator

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY (2018- 2025)

- Research, Data Analysis, and Report Writing
 - Gender issues
 - Indigenous community issues
 - Coaching research – lead researcher on this 2-year project to investigate what it is that coaches actually do and what they do that is most effective
- Mentoring/Teaching Human Systems Intervention coaches

BUMMIS (BUM-EEZ) INC. FOUNDER (1988 - 2015)

Founder and CEO of multi-million-dollar manufacturing company with offices, warehouses, and retail operations in Quebec and USA. Oversaw administration, sales, and operations for the company from its inception and throughout my career. Developed and nurtured long term, strong relationships with clients, distributors, suppliers, investors, banks, trade associations, and competitors, etc. Extensive experience in

leadership, and facilitating staff meetings, manager meetings, investor meetings, and industry networking meetings. Designed and facilitated training programs for staff and 400 retailers and distributors worldwide.

- Brand building.
- Strategic planning, business planning.
- Hired and coached a diverse team of employees in different geographical locations.
- Created a strong culture of communication & collaboration.
- Designed and managed several manufacturing, warehousing, and retail locations in Canada & US.
- Nurtured strong, long-term relationships with clients, distributors, suppliers, investors, banks, trade associations, and competitors, etc.
- Developed a deep understanding of the retail industry and traveled globally to trade shows to meet clients; kept on top of opportunities, challenges & trends in the industry in order to respond with agility to external changes.
- Established continuous improvement methodologies to keep business processes (sales, logistics, manufacturing, quality control) working smoothly.
- Served on the Board of the Retail Council of Canada; Inducted into the Canadian Retail Hall of Fame (2012).
- Founded 2 commercial associations (US & Canada) to support the reusable diaper industry.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Bachelor of Art – McGill University /1983

Certificate in Sustainable Change – McGill University/2018

Master's in Human Systems Intervention – Concordia University/2021

Other Skills and Training:

- Deep Democracy
- Non-Violent Communication basic level`
- Liberating Structures Training
- Inspiring leadership through emotional intelligence
- Women in leadership: inspiring positive change
- Conversations that inspire: coaching learning, leadership and change
- Leading positive change through appreciative inquiry
- Time management

Technology: MS Office (Excel, Word, PowerPoint), Google Suite, Website Development, Simply Accounting, various AI platforms

Languages: English & French (Professional Working Proficiency)

WRITING

Some examples of my writing can be found here: <https://www.betsythomas.com/blog>