



WJS Canada: Navigating a change in senior leadership with a *bold vision and strategic plan*

Case Study: WJS Canada

WJS Canada is a unique company. They are the largest privately owned social service provider in the country, in a sector predominantly served by nonprofits. They are employee-owned, and employ over 600 people across Alberta, BC, and Ontario. Their services areas include child and family support services, community and assisted living, indigenous community services, seniors care, youth justice programs, acquired brain injury, psychology, and more. Rather than being concentrated in urban areas like other large service providers, WJS Canada works extensively in rural and remote communities.

wjs strength in people



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Caroline Bonesky, CEO, WJS Canada



Junxion helped WJS Canada's new Board of Directors and CEO develop a bold vision and a five-year strategic plan in the period following a PR crisis and the unexpected exits of two senior executives at a critical transition time in the company's history.

The Business Challenge

Over the past 30 years, WJS Canada has grown to employ over 600 skilled people across three provinces, where they provide an array of family and community services, youth justice services, and other front line health care supports to their clients, mainly in rural and remote areas. In 2016, while *WJS Canada* was in the process of transitioning from one CEO to another, and operating with a new Board structure for the first time, an unusual opportunity arose when both of their long-standing provincial COOs unexpectedly exited the company.

Their newly-appointed Board, had just recruited a talented and experienced CEO: Caroline Bonesky, formerly CEO at Family Services of Greater Vancouver. Instead of being a crisis, Caroline saw this moment as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the organization to step back and rethink their direction and priorities. Junxion's challenge was to work with a brand new CEO and the new *WJS Canada* Board to reinvent their senior management structure and create a compelling five-year vision and strategic plan—a plan that would see them through a challenging period of transition and restore the confidence, creativity and enthusiasm that are hallmarks of *WJS Canada's* incredible corporate culture founded on “strength in people”.

How We Helped

Junxion conducted a review of competitors, opportunities and trends in the sector, interviewed the members of the national management team and several other stakeholders and experts, led focus groups with provincial management groups, and analyzed results of hundreds of survey responses from employees across the company. Junxion then led two full-day workshops with members of the executive and board to develop a new 10-year vision for *WJS Canada*, and a set of five-year goals and operational streams, before summarizing all the information gathered through the process into a comprehensive plan that was reviewed and accepted by the CEO and Board.

Measuring Success

Junxion's workshop facilitation process brought difficult conversations 'out into the open' in a way that participants described as refreshing and energizing.

CEO Caroline Bonesky reflected on the workshops: “It was encouraging to hear where we can be in 2027, and get that perspective from different regions and levels. It comes down to caring about clients and values—there is an abundance of spirit here. We can see a path to realizing the vision we've set out for ourselves.”

The in-person gathering of team members that often work separately in remote locations was a great opportunity to build trust and alignment about a 'new era' for the company. There was broad consensus that the process left an enduring feeling of shared purpose and optimism.

