

SHANNON TALBOT

CREATOR OF THE LEADERSHIP MASK

**Leadership Keynotes | Interactive
Workshops | Executive Offsites**





WHY SHANNON

Leadership lessons from the boardroom and medium security

Thank you for taking the time to consider me for your event.

Most leaders can tell when their team is capable of more. What is harder to see is what is getting in the way: the polite meeting, the idea that goes unsaid, or the strong person who quietly begins to check out.

Shannon Talbot calls this *The Leadership Mask*, the effort leaders spend managing how they are seen instead of leading as themselves. She knows it well. Across 17 years at Scotiabank, Loblaw, and Publicis Groupe, Shannon learned to look calm and capable while privately struggling with near-crippling anxiety. When she began leading more honestly, her credibility grew rather than shrank.

Her perspective deepened through over a year of virtually mentoring men at a California medium-security prison, where corporate titles and hierarchy disappeared and honest conversations became the starting point for change.

Shannon brings these two worlds together through candid stories, humour, audience interaction, and practical tools leaders can use immediately. Every session is tailored to the audience, event goals, and organizational context.

If this resonates with what your audience needs, I would love to explore how we could work together.

Shannon

SIGNATURE TALK

The Leadership Mask

What leaders hide behind, and what it costs when the mask stays on

Many leaders are wearing a mask. Not deliberately, and not dishonestly. Somewhere between their first promotion and the role they hold today, they learned to polish the answer, project certainty, and become the leader they thought everyone needed them to be.

That protection may have helped them succeed. But over time, it can cost them trust, energy, and the honest input of their team.

Through stories from the boardroom and a California medium-security prison, Shannon introduces four common Leadership Masks: the Perfectionist, People-Pleaser, Prover, and Pretender. She shows leaders how to recognize the mask they rely on, understand what triggers it, and set it down without losing their authority or credibility.

Participants will walk away with:

- Identify which of the four Leadership Masks they are most likely to use and the situations that trigger it
- Assess how that mask may be affecting their communication, decisions, and relationships with their team
- Apply a practical tool to respond more honestly in one real leadership situation without losing authority

Best for: Opening or closing keynotes, leadership development days, senior leadership teams, and association conferences.



KEYNOTE

The Credibility Gap

The hidden gap between what leaders intend and what teams experience

Credibility rarely disappears in one dramatic moment. It erodes in the small gaps between what leaders say and what they do, what they ask of others and what they model, and how they intend to come across and how their team actually experiences them.

People may still get along. Work still gets done. But feedback gets filtered, concerns go unspoken, and decisions are made without the full picture.

Drawing on 17 years of corporate leadership and over a year of virtually mentoring men at a California medium-security prison, Shannon shows how even well-intentioned leaders can unintentionally weaken their credibility. This talk helps leaders recognize the signals they may be sending, hear what their team is not saying, and close the gap between intention and impact.

Participants will walk away with:

- Identify gaps between how they intend to lead and how their words and actions may be experienced by others
- Assess which leadership behaviours may be causing feedback to be filtered, concerns to go unspoken, or trust to weaken
- Apply practical strategies to bring their words, actions, and expectations into greater alignment

Best for: Leadership conferences, executive teams, annual offsites, and organizations navigating growth or change.



KEYNOTE

Thriving Through Change

Why the mask gets heavier during uncertainty, and what to do about it

Change does not just challenge leaders. It exposes them. When the org chart shifts, the strategy pivots, and the team looks to them for certainty they do not feel, the mask gets heavier.

The instinct is often to sound confident, stay positive, and keep moving. But projecting certainty no one believes can create more doubt, not less.

Drawing on her experience leading high-pressure change across financial services and advertising, along with lessons from a California medium-security prison, Shannon offers leaders a more credible way forward: being clear about what they know, honest about what they do not, and specific about what they need from the people around them. Leaders leave with practical ways to communicate through change, address concerns, and help their teams move forward without pretending everything is fine.

Participants Will Walk Away With:

- Identify leadership behaviours that can increase uncertainty or weaken trust during periods of change
- Assess what their teams need to hear, including what is changing, what is not, and what remains unknown
- Apply practical strategies to communicate clearly, respond honestly to concerns, and keep their teams moving forward

Best for: Organizations going through restructuring, rapid growth, or leadership transitions. Teams navigating uncertainty.



KEYNOTE

From Burnout to Brilliance

Why leaders burn out, and why self-care isn't the answer

Before high-pressure meetings, Shannon used to take half a Gravol to settle her stomach. Her team thought she was one of the most confident people in the room. She was not. For years, she hid near-crippling anxiety behind a front so practised it had started to feel like the truth.

That is the burnout many conversations miss. Workload matters, but so does the sustained effort of appearing fine when you are not. The mask is exhausting, and the longer it stays on, the harder it can become to lead sustainably.

Grounded in Shannon's own experience and lessons from a California medium-security prison, this keynote helps leaders recognize how masking can contribute to burnout and find practical ways to lead with greater honesty, energy, and sustainability.

Participants will walk away with:

- Identify early warning signs of burnout in themselves and others that may be hidden behind appearing capable or fine
- Assess how behaviours such as perfectionism, over-functioning, hiding struggles, or avoiding help may be contributing to burnout
- Apply practical strategies to reduce unnecessary strain, seek support earlier, and lead more sustainably

Best for: Mental health awareness programming, women in leadership conferences, leadership teams, and any organization where burnout is present but nobody is talking about the real cause.



Trusted by organizations, including:



What clients and audiences are saying

“Shannon Talbot’s presence on stage was nothing short of incredible. Hers was a true masterclass delivered with depth and sheer brilliance.”

-Iris Babu, CHRP, Human Resources Business Partner, Emerson, HR Law Conference 2026

“Shannon listened to our needs, tailored her message to our audience, and delivered engaging, practical insights. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Shannon again.”

-Lisa Stevenson, President, Junior League Toronto

“As our organization navigated tremendous change, Shannon challenged our thinking and delivered practical tools in a relatable and approachable way.”

-Rachel Zumpe, Senior Manager, HR & Labour Relations,
Laurentis Energy Partners

“Coming from the corporate world, Shannon understood our leaders’ challenges and left them with practical tools they could apply immediately.”

-Tiffany Wilson, Director, Consulting Services, CGI



ABOUT SHANNON

Shannon Talbot is a leadership speaker, facilitator, and author who helps leaders recognize and remove the protective behaviours that weaken confidence, trust, and connection.

Before launching her company, Shannon spent 17 years leading teams and complex initiatives across 25 countries at Scotiabank, Loblaw, and Publicis Groupe. She knows what it is like to look confident while struggling privately, and how much can change when a leader stops managing the image and starts leading more honestly.

Her perspective was further shaped by over a year of virtually mentoring men at a California medium-security prison, where corporate titles and hierarchy disappeared, and growth depended on honest conversations, courage, and personal responsibility.

Known for candid stories, humour, and practical tools, Shannon helps audiences see themselves in the message and leave knowing what to do differently.

CREDENTIALS

- 17 years of corporate leadership across financial services and advertising
- Led teams and initiatives across 25 countries
- MBA, Schulich School of Business
- Certified EQ practitioner and transformational coach
- Author of Breaking Free, a National Indie Excellence Awards finalist
- Featured on CBC Radio, Breakfast Television, Business Insider, and Today's Parent

Keynotes (30-90 min) | Leadership Programs
Interactive Workshops (half or full day)

TO BOOK SHANNON

Planning a leadership event, offsite, or conference?

Let's talk about your audience, your goals, and the keynote or workshop that will create the strongest fit.

For availability, fees, or a tailored topic recommendation, contact:

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