A PRINCIPLES-CENTRED LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND'S FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR.

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Leadership Model.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2022, the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence commissioned the New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust to research and design a leadership development ecosystem for Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector. The first report[1] examined the state of leadership development in the sector.

This research report builds on the findings of that report and will be followed by two more outputs, 1) a progression framework for leader development that is aligned (where appropriate) to the New Zealand Qualifications framework and 2) a best-practice handbook for leadership in the sector.

The purpose of this report is to propose a leadership model that will form the basis of the Sector's leadership development ecosystem.

It is based on a second round of field research conducted over the period, January to May 2023: which tested and refined the first report's six provisional leadership principles, that were developed from a series of semi-structured interviews with 60 industry leaders.

The outcome of this report is a principles-centred leadership model. It is made of three core facets that powerfully combine to multiply the impact of each of the others.

The model: 1) attunes the practitioner to the food and fibre context, 2) centre's leadership practice on three simple leadership principles, 3) draw's the reader's eye to three dimensions of leadership that need to be present if a leader is to truly lead. Leaders who truly lead unleash their potential and that of those around them to create exponential impact (see figure 1, page 7).

[1]Parsons C., & Nelson E., (2023), The State of Leader Development in New Zealand's Food and Fibre Sector, Lincoln: New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust. Available at: https://ruralleaders.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/The-state-of-leader-development-in-NZFF_web.pdf (Accessed 16 July 2023).

1. BACKGROUND

WHY DOES LEADERSHIP MATTER?

Our Food and Fibre sector continues to power New Zealand's economy as our top export earner. Hon. Damien O'Connor

The Food and Fibre sector[2] is the nation's most productive sector and accounts for almost 82% of merchandise exports (MPI, June 2023). A small change in how it performs can have a material impact on national outcomes. Despite its outsized contribution to national wealth and pockets of exceptional performance, the symptoms of a culture that values technical skills more than people skills are widespread across the Food and Fibre sector.

The Sector needs to pause and define what it wants from leadership. Despite the many wonderful exemplars of great leaders, generally the Sector has taken a transactional approach – we have prized rugged hard work, getting the job done, and technical competence as the metrics of success. This barbed wire and boot leather approach to leadership has

resulted in a Sector that struggles to attract talent.[3] We face some of the highest industry talent loss rates of any sector in Aotearoa New Zealand (71% of new entrants over 3 years).

The sector has high internal staff churn (20-50% per year), high numbers of injuries and death, high rates of stress, succession challenges, low-productivity (relative to New Zealand's OECD comparators), low-margin businesses,[4] relatively low education levels, and slower than ideal adaptation rates. These symptoms of a misaligned system can be correlated with higher than necessary environmental impacts,[5] challenges to the sector's social license, increasing regulation and a reduced ability to deliver for the country.

To make the next productivity leap the sector will need to truly engage

and develop its people. According to Gallup's 2022 global workforce survey, engaged workers are 23% more profitable than non-engaged workers.[6] It follows that a thriving leadership culture in which people are engaged and developed is commercially smart. Growing a deep bench of high-performing leaders at every level is the spark needed for a Sector full of thriving and profitable teams.

[2]Dalziel P., Saunders C., and Saunders J., (2018). The New Zealand Food and Fibre Sector: A Situational Analysis. Client report prepared for the Primary Sector Council. Lincoln University: Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit, p. vii. Available at: https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/33457/direct (Accessed 30 August 2021)
[3]We need to develop cultural acuity within our leadership system to reflect New Zealand's changing demographics. NZ Stats predicts that the much younger age structure of Māori, Pasifika, and Asian populations means that by 2043 they will be 50% of the working-age population, compared with 37% in 2018. See NZ Statistics
[4]With some notable exceptions, including Rocket Apples and Kiwifruit Gold.
[5]Zamani, G & Karami, Ezatollah. (2006). Rural leadership and sustainable agriculture: Criteria for recruiting leaders. Journal of Food, Agriculture and Environment. 4. p.229.
[6]Gallup, (2022), State of the Global Workplace 2022 Report THE VOICE OF THE WORLD'S EMPLOYEES, pp. 4, 6 & 99. Available at https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace-2022-report.aspx (Accessed 11 July 2023)

PRINCIPLE FINDINGS OF THE FIRST REPORT

The first report into the state of leadership development found that most people within the sector are not accessing leadership training. For those that do, the development pathways are often disjointed, and unclear.[7] Based on 60 interviews, there was a consensus among senior leaders of what good leadership looks and feels like. These views were distilled into six provisional leadership principles (see annex A).

METHODOLOGY

This research report tests and refines the findings of the first round of research to produce a leadership model.

The first tranche of research, for the first report, canvased mostly senior people and was inductive in nature (meaning there were no predetermined categories to assign the data). Research for the second stage of the project (this report) was geared to getting practitioner views. It was conducted between January and May 2023, and included people at varying levels within the sector. The research sought to draw from a diverse range of participants with a mix of geographic, gender, and ethnic identities, plus a mix of formal qualification levels, roles across industries and value chains. The process was deductive in nature (a logical process to test hypothesis or theories). Participants were asked to consider and discuss the provisional principles.

The working hypothesis was that to create a coherent ecosystem for leadership development, a coherent model of leadership is needed. Such a model would need to resonate with those

it serves. It should also be sufficiently anchored in the literature and international best-practice to have the substance required to provide the intellectual core of a leadership development ecosystem capable of meeting the needs of a Sector as large, diverse, and sophisticated as Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector.

The research for this report followed a four-step process.

- *The first step* involved field research. 13 focus groups involving 173 people were conducted from Auckland to Invercargill. The conversational styled, focus groups were conducted by the lead researchers for this project and typically lasted 90 – 120 minutes.

- *Step two* involved an on-line survey, which attracted 95 responses. The responses are summarised at annex B. Together both methods of research gained insights from +/- 268 people (some focus groups attendees also responded to the survey). *The demographics of the respondents are tabulated at*

annex C.

- *The third step* involved the researchers critically analysing the research data to develop a refined 'principles-centred model of leadership' upon which to design a leadership development ecosystem for the Food and Fibre sector.

- *The fourth step* involved submitting the first draft of this report for review to a technical reference group comprising 18 senior practitioners in the leadership development field, including those leading in Māori and Pasifika contexts.

[7]Parsons C., & Nelson E., (2023), p. 6.

2. KEY FINDINGS

Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on Earth. James MacGregor Burns

INTRODUCTION

Despite its mysteries, the effects of leadership are keenly seen and felt across every aspect of personal, social, and business life. Defining leadership is difficult due to its innate paradoxes: for instance, true leadership is deeply personal and yet collectively transformative. Therefore, this report avoids the trap of prescribing a leadership definition, leaders should choose their own. It does however provide a model for considering leading and leadership in the Food and Fibre sector.

This section articulates a principles-centred leadership model. It is designed to attune the practitioner to the food and fibre context, then align them to three simple principles of leading, it then asks the practitioner to look deeply within: to truly lead and in doing so unleash their potential and ability to create exponential impact (figure 1).

LEADERS, LEADING, AND LEADERSHIP

This report makes the subtle but important distinction between the term's, leader, leading, and leadership. A *leader* is a person. *Leading* is an act. *Leadership* is a position or role that comes with accountability.[8] At an industry or sector level, we grow leaders through a leadership system or better yet, an ecosystem. The next report in the series will expand on the concept of an ecosystem framework for leadership development.

All people can, and should, lead. To lead is simply the act of influencing others, it does not require a title, a position, or authority. To lead is to convey an idea or behave in a manner that others see value in and then adopt or adapt for themselves. The most successful teams embrace leading in this context – everyone leans in.

Those placed in leadership carry other responsibilities beyond just leading. These include weaving a team together and taking accountability (often for people's lives and livelihoods) while also being prepared to share responsibility and authority with them. Not everyone is well-suited to this task. In its best form, leadership is a service to others and to a meaningful purpose. Taking on the mantle of leadership requires leaders to be selected, trained, equipped, and supported.

How does Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector become synonymous with a thriving leadership culture? Leadership and our understanding of it is a never-ending journey: this report is but a step on the path. What is clear is that leadership has both utility and value.

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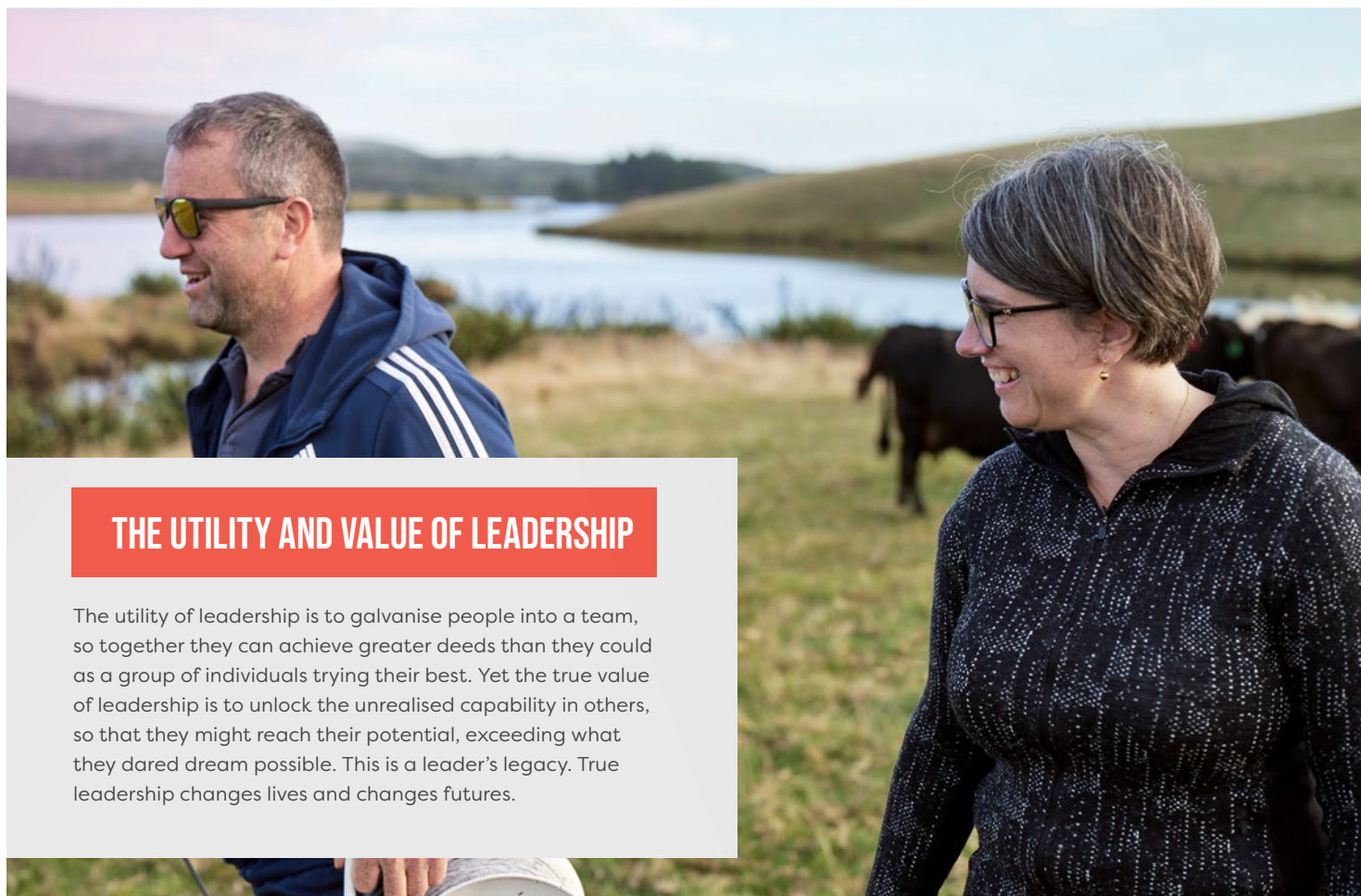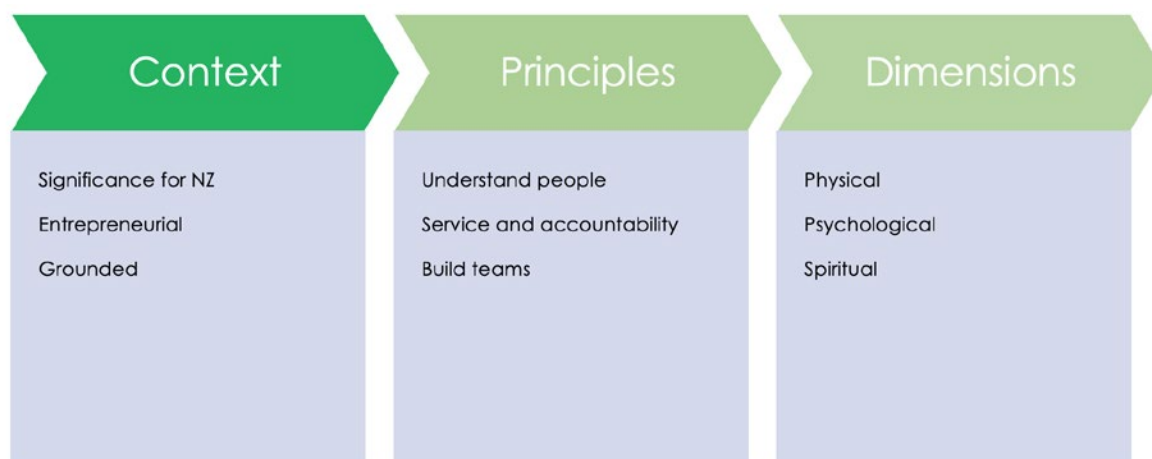
THE UTILITY AND VALUE OF LEADERSHIP

The utility of leadership is to galvanise people into a team, so together they can achieve greater deeds than they could as a group of individuals trying their best. Yet the true value of leadership is to unlock the unrealised capability in others, so that they might reach their potential, exceeding what they dared dream possible. This is a leader's legacy. True leadership changes lives and changes futures.

PRINCIPLES-CENTRED LEADERSHIP MODEL

Based on the research, a principles-centred leadership model has been developed. It has three major elements. Each element can be considered separately, but the power of the model is when it is applied together. The model leads the practitioner on a personal journey: it attunes them with the context of leading in the food and fibre sector, then aligns them to three simple principles of leading, finally it asks the practitioner to look deeply within: to truly lead and in doing so unleash their potential and ability to create exponential impact.

Figure 1: The Food and Fibre Sector's Principles-Centred Leadership Model

Context	Principles	Dimensions
Significance for NZ	Understand people	Physical
Entrepreneurial	Service and accountability	Psychological
Grounded	Build teams	Spiritual

[8]Oxford English Dictionary, (2023), Leadership. Available at: https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=leadership, (Accessed 29 July 2023)

1ST ELEMENT: LEADERSHIP CONTEXT

While there are many cross-cutting characteristics of leading and leadership that are common to all sectors and segments of society, there are also several characteristics that are unique to the Food and Fibre sector.

The Food and Fibre sector is fundamentally grounded in the biology and ecology of our natural world.

It includes our primary sector production industries (other than mining) and the related processing industries. It also includes service industries along the value chain from producer to final customer, including providers of transport, storage, distribution, marketing, and sales.[9]

SIGNIFICANCE

The Food and Fibre sector is the nation's most productive sector and accounts for almost 82% of Aotearoa New Zealand's merchandise exports.[10] Even a small improvement in how the Sector unleash-es the potential of its people will have a disproportionate impact on the wealth and wellbeing of the nation.

In short, creating pathways for people to develop and take on increasing responsibility can have a multiplier effect on Aotearoa New Zealand's future prosperity that goes beyond the impact that leadership systems in other sectors can create.

ENTREPRENEURIAL

Given the importance of the Food and Fibre sector to the nation's wealth and wellbeing, fostering entrepreneurial mindsets should be a key characteristic of leadership development. The utility of entrepreneurialism is often thought of as wealth generation. However, entrepreneurial leadership skills can create social and environmental value. A leadership ecosystem that promotes entrepreneurial spirit aligns with the Sector's can-do attitude and will play a crucial role in creating economic, social, and environmental outcomes (Berg, et al 2023).[11]

FOOD AND FIBRE LEADERS NEED TO BE GROUNDED

In principle all leaders, regardless of sector, should be grounded (genuine, connected, and attuned to the environment they work in and the people they serve). But this is particularly relevant for the Food and Fibre sector where the sector is deeply connected to the earth and oceans. Food and Fibre leaders need to be grounded in four ways:

Practically grounded.
The type of people who make up an essential part of the sector are of the earth and the oceans.

They are deeply practical, often independently minded, and resilient. They expect leaders to be humble, straight-forward, pragmatic, and competent.

Naturally grounded.
At its heart, the Food and Fibre sector has a reciprocal relationship with te Taiao (the natural world) that is deeply bound to nature's seasonal rhythms and changing weather patterns.

[9]Dalziel, P., et al. p. vii.
[10]Ministry for Primary Industries, (June 2023), Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries, p.4. Available at: https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/57298-Situation-and-Outlook-for-Primary-Industries-SOPI-June-2023 (Accessed 18 July 2023)
[11]Berg N., et al., (2023), The Mackenzie Study: A Cross-sectional Study of Nuffield and Kellogg Scholars Entrepreneurial Skills, University of Otago, p. 37, Available at: https://ruralleaders.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Mackenzie-Study_1-6-23-1.pdf (Accessed 29 July 2023)

Respect for the natural world is not just important for the sector, it is the central pillar on which everything else is built For those of the land – home, work, and identity are entwined: they belong to the land and the water (whenua and wai), not the other way around.

Culturally attuned.

As an export-facing sector, those in Food and Fibre leadership need to understand cultures and customers abroad.

The task is no different at home. The demographics of the food and fibre workforce are changing; by 2043, 50% of the workforce will be Māori, Pasifika and Asian.[12] Leaders must be bi-culturally grounded (mindful of our nation's founding Te Tiriti partnership between Māori and British under the Crown) and yet be able to lead competently within a multicultural context.

Community-minded.

The Food and Fibre sector accounts for less than 13% of the nation's workforce[13] and yet it is distributed over more than 50% of Aotearoa New Zealand's land area[14] and harvests fish from the World's 4th largest exclusive economic zone (equivalent to 430 million hectares). In this sparsely populated and physically demanding environment, leaders bridge physical isolation by fostering community spirit.

Figure 2: Food and Fibre Leadership Principles

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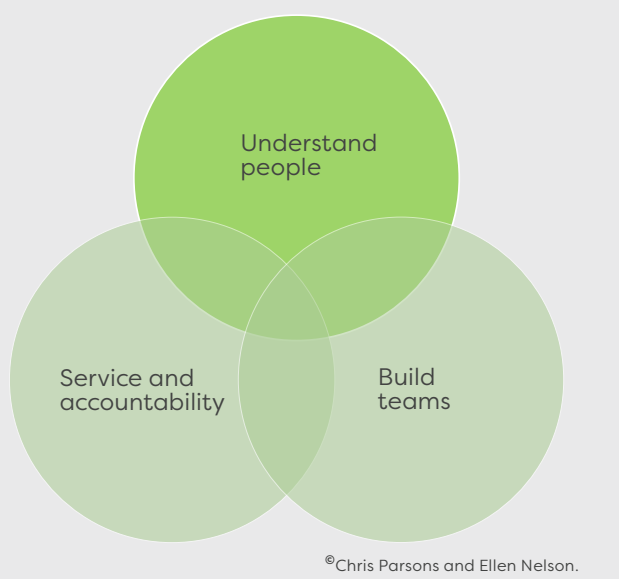
Principles are fundamental propositions that serve as the foundation for a system of beliefs or behaviour or a chain of reasoning.

Research drawn from the sector itself has been distilled into the following three principles for leading and leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector:
1) **understand people,**
2) **service and accountability, and**
3) **build teams.**

UNDERSTAND PEOPLE

Knowing yourself, knowing others, and bridging the distance between is at the heart of the leader's craft. To quote the late Maria Ngatai, "leadership is not just about relationships; it is all about relationships." The first relationship is knowing, growing, and managing yourself; this is where leadership begins. Knowing yourself is a life's journey, it is hard work, and it takes real humility to find the truth within.

But if you cannot lead yourself, you cannot hope to lead other people.

Leaders also need to see and understand others, their drivers, hopes, and fears, as well as their unique and diverse gifts. Leaders then build a bridge between themselves and other people. To do this, leaders do more than communicate – they connect. For instance, most people harbour self-doubt.

One of the greatest gifts a leader can give is to show belief in another, even before they can see it in themselves. At its best connecting is akin to creating a sense of family, this is the Māori value of whakawhanaungatanga.[15] This is the depth of connection assumed as normal in Māori working contexts. It is also reflected in the community spirit that is central to a thriving sector.

[12]DairyNZ & Ministry for Primary Industries, (2022), GREAT FUTURES IN DAIRYING Our plan for a resilient workforce 2022–2032, p. 10. Available at: https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5795487/dnz_great_futures_in_dairying_a4-booklet_web_june2022.pdf (Accessed 14 February 2023)
[13]Ministry for Primary Industries (December 2022), Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries, p.6. Available at: https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/54517-Situation-and-Outlook-for-Primary-Industries-SOPI-December-2022 (Accessed 18 July 2023)
[14]Statistics NZ, (April 2021), New report shows impact of demands on land in New Zealand. https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-report-shows-impact-of-demands-on-land-in-new-zealand/#:~:text=About%20half%20of%20the%20total,%2C%20native%20land%20cover%2049%25.
[15]whaka – to cause to be, whanaunga – relation or family member, tanga – suffix added to nouns to designate the quality derived from the base noun.

SERVICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Leadership is an act of service. To truly lead means putting others first and serving a purpose greater than yourself.[16] It is not a role for the faint-hearted. Leadership can be lonely, because the leader must step beyond the comfort of the status quo and have the courage of their convictions to try something new, or to change accepted practice in the faith that there is a better way. When leaders step forward, they risk criticism for their views, failure of their ideas, and ultimately if they do succeed the Kiwi pastime of chopping down tall poppies awaits. Nonetheless, the buck stops with the leader; accountability cannot be delegated.

Despite the risk, leaders must have the courage to delegate their authority. That is the burden of leadership. It takes moral courage to carry the risk while giving others autonomy to act. As a rule, responsibility and authority should be delegated to the lowest competent level within the team. Hence the best leaders coach and grow the competence of those they lead. Notwithstanding the challenges, there are few greater joys than the quiet pride a leader feels when they see the people or purpose they have served grow.

BUILD TEAMS

Leaders build teams and teamwork. This is beautifully illustrated by the Māori term for leader, Rangatira, which combines two words 'raranga' and 'tira', meaning to weave people together.[17] Leaders weave people together by fostering a climate of belonging, autonomy, and purpose – these three are deeply seated human needs. All people yearn for connection and a sense of belonging. This is not the same as fitting in. Belonging is when you can bring your whole, authentic, unique self and feel truly valued and included. True leaders foster this for all.

To thrive people also need freedom and control over their lives. People want to have input and a sense of independence over how, when and where they conduct their tasks, and this creates their genuine buy-in.[18] Lastly, people do best when their life has meaningful purpose.

They need to know that what they are doing matters – they need to know the 'why'. When these three elements are present, a team has a thriving culture and can create superior impact.

[16]This aligns with the Niuean concept of Fakafekauaga (Servantship). Makapatama, G., (n.d.), Introducing Fakafekauaga (Servantship), The Southern Initiative, https://www.tsi.nz/tsi-updates-feed/introducing-fakafekaugaa-servantship (Accessed 18 July 2023).
[17]Henry, E., & Wolfgramm, R., (2018) Relational leadership – An indigenous Māori perspective, Leadership, Volume 14, Issue 2, https://doi org/10.1177/1742715015616282
[18]Pink, D., (2011), Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us, Riverhead Books
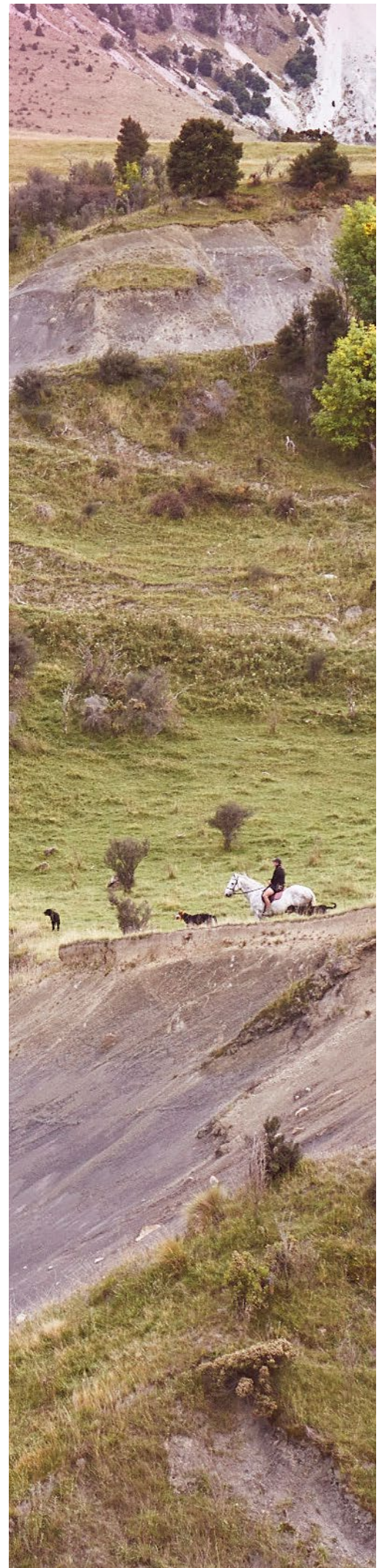
3RD ELEMENT: DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP - FINDING TRUE LEADERSHIP

The principles of leadership provide a model for how good leaders behave (connect, serve, and build teams) to get the best from, and for, those they serve. But to get an insight into true leadership requires a different lens. The researchers advance a theory of leadership, précised below, that goes some way toward shining a light on leadership's underlying essence.

The theory is not new, insofar as it is an integration of several theories, including transactional and transformational leadership, Burns (1978) and Bass ((1985).[19] But it then goes further and borrows from the 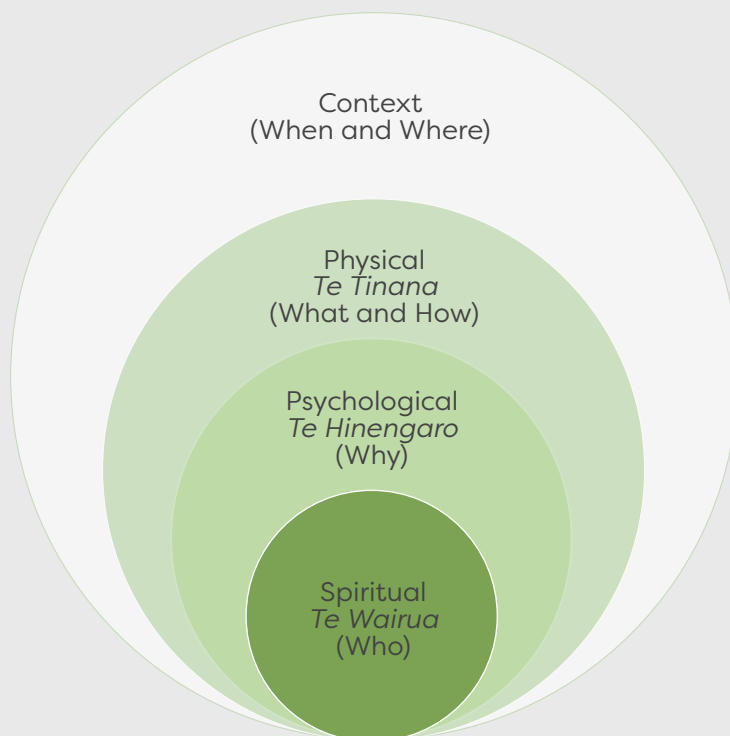age-old wisdoms common to many cultures and faiths as well as some of the concepts advanced by Sir Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model, and modern psychological research. Another way to consider it, is that it tips Maslow's hierarchy upside down. The problem with the way Maslow's hierarchy is shown, is that the most important question, 'who you are', is asked last. Unless that is asked and answered first, a leader's true impact will only be realised little and late. Who we are is at the core of why, what, and how we lead. The integration of these ideas is coined true leadership.

CONTEXT

All leaders lead within a context; they are of their time and place. Where a leader stands can include, but is not limited to, their connections to whanau (family), whenua (land), and wai (water). As with all things, our context is ever changing.

The best leaders see beyond the horizon and lead those they serve through the changing context for the purpose of a thriving future. For instance, during the Pre-industrial Age, leadership resided with the privileged few, and workers were mainly used for manual toil. In the Industrial Age, the challenge of leadership lay in managing mechanised workforces, where individual workers were treated as human resources, whose humanity was often excluded from the workplace. The Information Age brought transformation, as effective leaders sought to engage an educated and skilled workforce through inspiration and individualised consideration. Now as we enter the Age of Artificial Intelligence, the leadership paradigm is changing again.

Figure 3: True Leadership

Context
(When and Where)

Physical
Te Tinana
(What and How)

Psychological
Te Hinengaro
(Why)

Spiritual
Te Wairua
(Who)

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As robots and algorithms begin to think for themselves, people's unique value will be in their humanity. The new leadership challenge will be to foster the significance of authentic human bonds, harnessing qualities like creativity, emotional intelligence, and character. As we negotiate rapid change, the best leaders will apply the following three dimensions to their craft.

Physical Dimension.

Te Tinana or the physical dimension relates to a leader's use of tangible and practical techniques. This conforms with the concept of transactional leadership. In this dimension, leaders satisfy a team or task's need for structure and consistency. Leading at this level is a vital component of leadership, albeit managerial in nature. Leaders who limit themselves to the physical dimension, are restricted to transactional techniques, such as the application of positional power (rewards and punishment) to achieve their objectives.

Psychological Dimension.

Te Hinengaro or the psychological dimension relates to a leader's humanity, their IQ, EQ, motivation, and drive. This conforms with transformational leadership theory. In this dimension, leaders apply personal power (referent and expert) to move people and inspire them at a hearts and minds level.

Spiritual Dimension.

Te Wairua or the spiritual dimension is at the core of every person. Different cultures and traditions have different names for this dimension: instinct, gut feeling, intuition, sixth sense, deep knowing, and character to name a few. It is from this centre that a leader's mauri or life force – their unique character, energy, authenticity, and ability to connect with the infinite – comes from.

Leaders who are brave enough to truly understand themselves and lead from their core, have a special dimension that is not otherwise possible. This is amplified when leaders are willing to see others for who they truly are too. To quote from the first principle *'to know yourself is hard work and it takes real humility to find the truth.'*

TRUE LEADERSHIP

Ultimately, it is the combination of all three dimensions (physical, psychological, and spiritual) that makes the difference. If leaders align who they are, with why, what, and how they lead – they are in flow – they are truly leading. Each leader must discover for themselves the old wisdoms that ring true down through the ages.

The three dimensions of leadership were elegantly summed up on the following page by the great Tā Āpirana Ngata in 1949 when he wrote:

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E tipu e rea mo ngā rā o tō ao.

**Ko tō ringa ki ngā rākau
ā te Pākehā Hei
ara mō tō tinana.**

**Ko tō ngākau ki ngā tāonga
a ō tīpuna Māori.**

**Hei tikitiki mō tō māhuna.
Ko tō wairua ki tō Atua,
Nānā nei ngā mea katoa'**

Thrive in the days
destined for you.

Your hand to the tools
of the Pākehā to provide
physical sustenance.

Your heart to the treasures
of your ancestors to
adorn your head.

Your soul to God, to whom
all things belong.

3. CONCLUSION

The wellspring of true leadership is deeply and uniquely personal and yet collectively transformative. So, in the end, we start where we began. Leadership is a mystifying phenomenon because it is a parlour of paradoxes, its logic is seemingly upside down.

If you wish to influence others, know yourself.
If you wish to lead, serve.
If you wish to generate power, share it.

ANNEXES

PROVISIONAL PRINCIPLES

These principles were developed in the first stage of the project to define a Food and Fibre Leadership Development Ecosystem. They are based on interviews with 60 people (mostly senior leaders) from across the food and fibre sector. Diagrammatically we showed these principles as a pyramid where the foundational principles are at the base, the core disciplines of leadership are in the centre and the role and responsibilities of those in leadership are at the pinnacle. The diagram sought to make the difficult distinction between the act of leading, i.e. influencing others, and the broader requirements of leadership.

Figure 4: Provisional Food and Fibre Leadership Principles
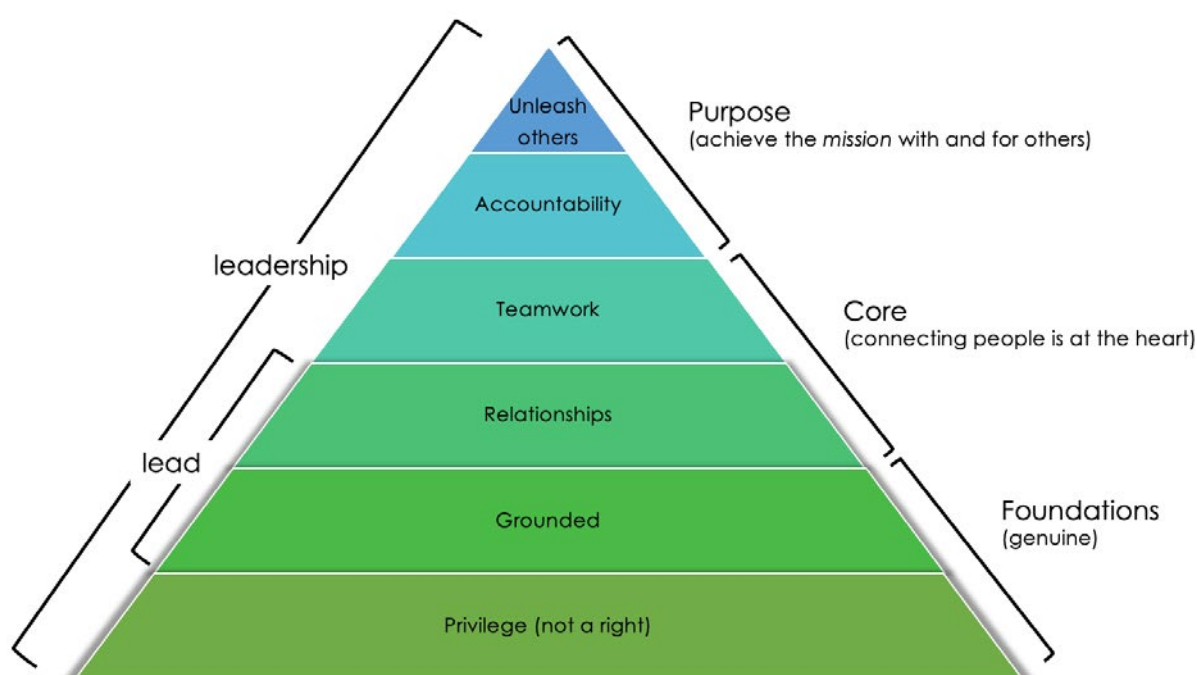
Table 1: Provisional Principles

Foundation	A privilege	Everyone can and should lead, whether they hold a title or a position, or do not. However, it is a privilege to take on the mantle of leadership. Those who aspire to leadership need to be selected, equipped for, and supported in the role, due to the exponential impact (for good or bad) that leaders can have on others and on organisational objectives.
	Grounded	The Food and Fibre sector is unique in its connection to Te Taiao (the natural world). The people who work the land and water prefer practical, humble, straight-forward leaders who are competent and community-minded and who have a purposeful passion for providing life sustaining food and fibre.
Core	Relationships	Leading and leadership are not *just* about relationships, they are *all* about relationships.
	Teamwork	Leaders turn groups into teams. To do so they harness diversity, build belonging, and connect the team to a unifying purpose.
Purpose	Accountability	Leadership is not about importance; it is about accountability. A leader's accountability is indivisible, but they can and should build the capabilities of their team so that they can delegate authority and responsibility. To delegate authority and responsibility while retaining accountability, requires leaders to exercise both trust and moral courage.
	Unleash the Potential in Others	The best leaders in the Food and Fibre sector are those that promote the conditions for others to be their best.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Questions

What does leadership mean to you?

95 responses

Summarised answers

The respondents highlighted various perspectives on leadership, emphasising qualities such as empowering others, inspiring and motivating teams, setting a clear vision, collaborating, supporting growth, and making a positive contribution. Leadership involves guiding and enabling individuals and teams to achieve common goals, creating an environment of trust and respect, and being accountable for the success and well-being of others.

It requires effective communication, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and adaptability. Leadership is not limited to formal positions or qualifications but is about influencing and positively impacting the lives of others. Overall, leadership is seen as a holistic and dynamic process that involves developing people, fostering collaboration, and driving positive change.

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Questions

Summarised answers

Rate how important you believe these are as leadership principles. 1 = unimportant and 5 = very important.

Leading Others is a Privilege.

95 responses

Leading Others is a Privilege. In its truest form, leadership is bestowed on the leader by those who entrust their lives and livelihoods to them. It is a privilege not a right.
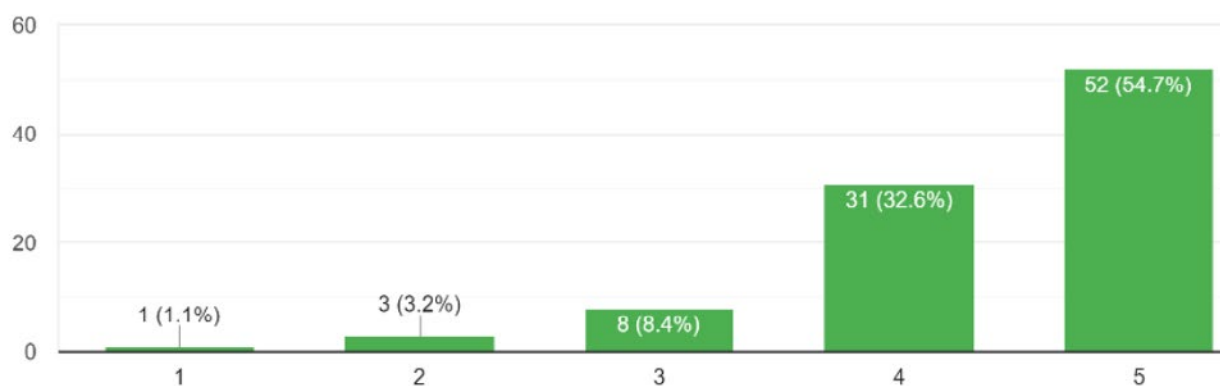
Leaders are grounded.

95 responses

Leaders, regardless of sector, should be grounded (genuine, connected, and attuned to the environment they work in and the people they serve). This is particularly relevant for the Food and Fibre sector.
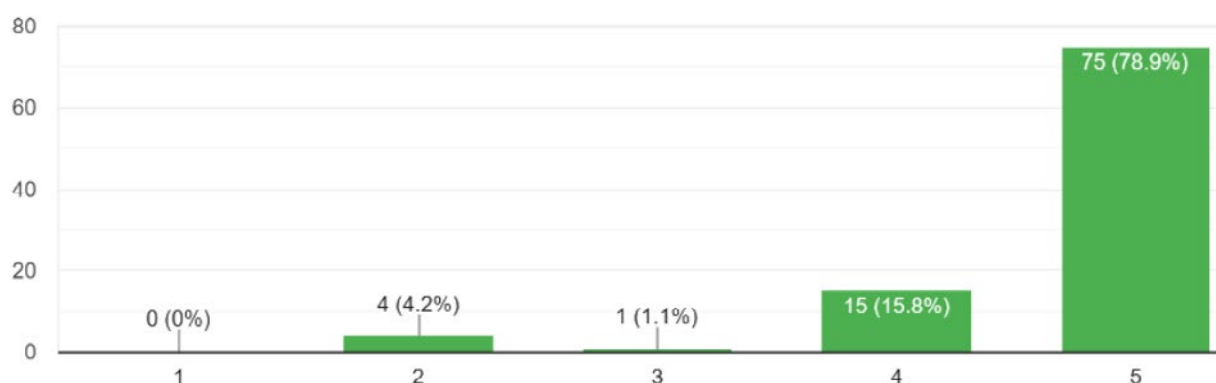
Leaders build relationships.

95 responses

People are at the heart of leadership. The sector needs to emphasise and equip leaders with people skills, not just technical skills. To lead (influence) others is most effective when people are moved emotionally, not just logically.
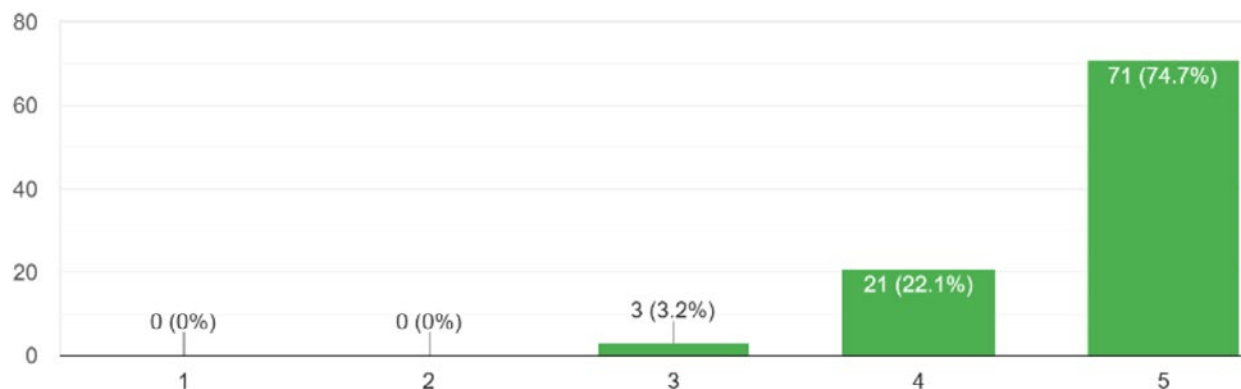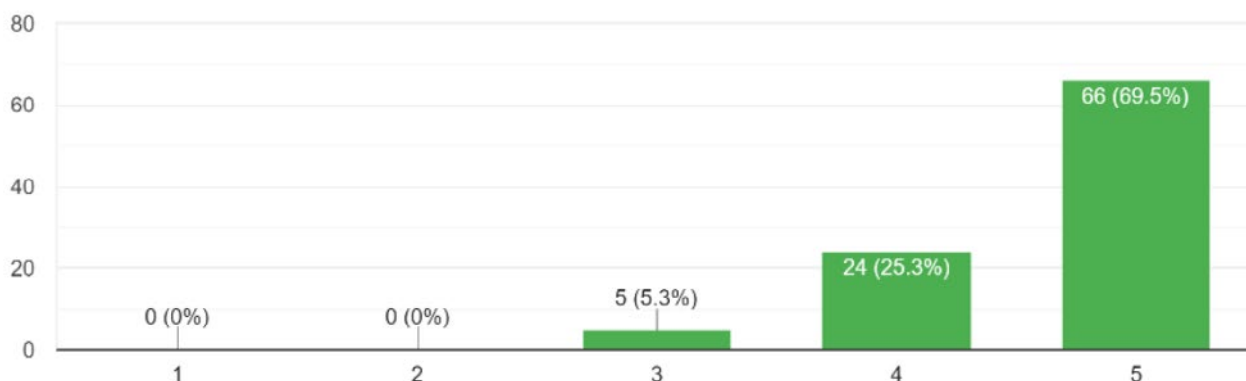
Questions

Leadership is about teamwork.

95 responses

Summarised answers

A key principle of leadership is teamwork. Often this involves turning a group of people into a team. A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, goals, and approach for which they hold each other mutually accountable. A team is different from a group.
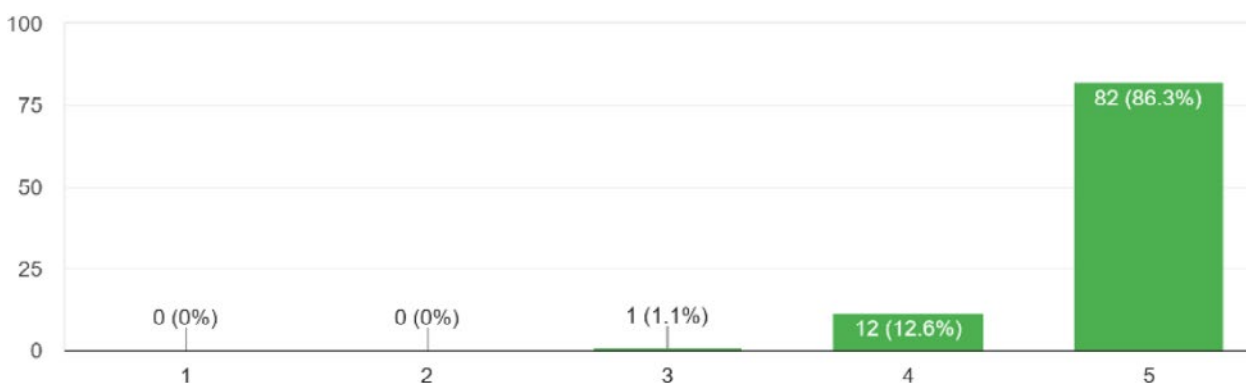

Leaders are accountable.

95 responses
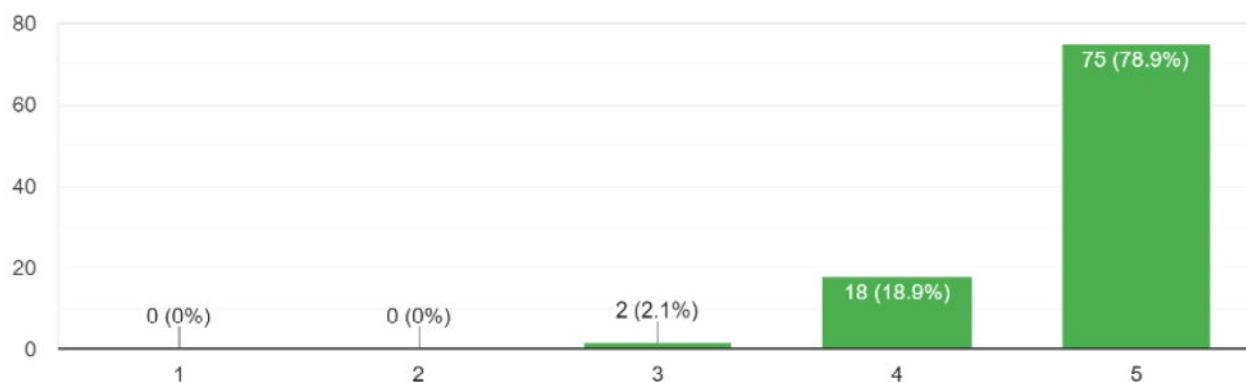
Those in leadership roles are accountable for the success of the team and the organisation. 'Good leaders are honest and transparent in their decisions and how they [steward their people] and utilise the resources at their disposal.

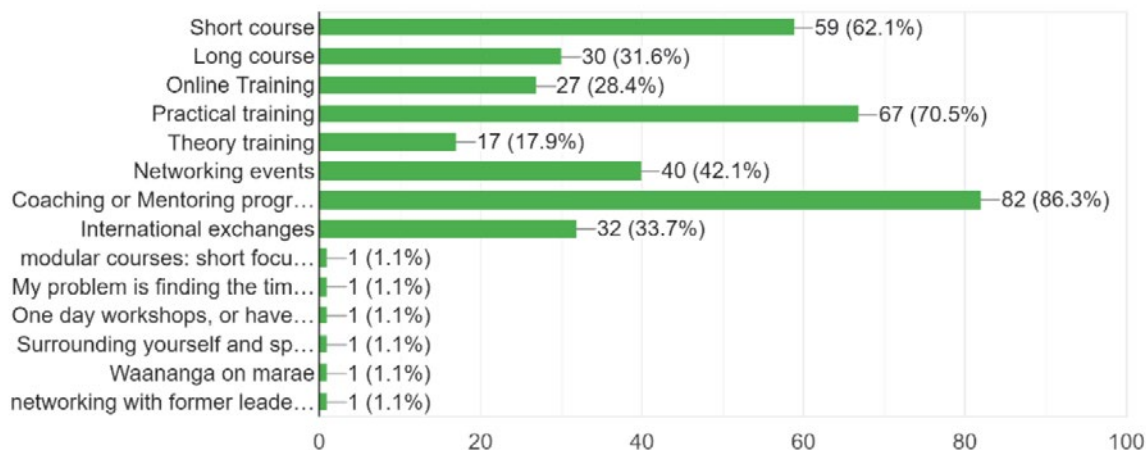Leaders unleash the potential in others.

95 responses

The best leaders in the food and fibre sector are those that promote the conditions for others to be their best.

Questions

How would you most prefer to experience leadership development?

95 responses

Short course	59 (62.1%)
Long course	30 (31.6%)
Online Training	27 (28.4%)
Practical training	67 (70.5%)
Theory training	17 (17.9%)
Networking events	40 (42.1%)
Coaching or Mentoring progr…	82 (86.3%)
International exchanges	32 (33.7%)
modular courses: short focu…	1 (1.1%)
My problem is finding the tim…	1 (1.1%)
One day workshops, or have…	1 (1.1%)
Surrounding yourself and sp…	1 (1.1%)
Waananga on marae	1 (1.1%)
networking with former leade…	1 (1.1%)

How many days per year would you be comfortable to attend training outside your place of work?

95 responses

- 2 days   5.3%
- 4 days   6.3%
- 5 days   29.5%
- 5-10 days   3.2%
- 10 days   11.6%
- the remaining 44% of preferences   no consensus over 1%

Summarised views on other important principles of leadership?

43 responses

Summarised answers

Responses emphasised the importance of certain qualities and behaviours. Leaders are described as lacking ego, being sincere, and having a transparent purpose. They are open-minded, grounded, and willing to adapt. Honesty, integrity, and humility are valued traits. Leaders listen actively, recognise and amplify others' contributions, and serve those they lead. They mentor and build talent, foster reflection and self-awareness, and value diverse perspectives. Resilience, creativity, and passion are crucial for navigating challenges and inspiring others.

Effective communication, trustworthiness, and empathy are key elements. Leaders are respectful, build relationships, and encourage growth. They challenge the status quo, expand perspectives, and create opportunities for others to lead. They value and empower their team, demonstrate a growth mindset, and prioritise learning and personal growth. **Ultimately, leadership is seen as a way of life that involves serving others and making a positive impact.**

Questions

Is there anything else you would like to contribute, that could inform this leadership development project?

36 responses

Summarised answers

Overall, the responses recognise the importance of leadership development in the Food and Fibre sector and a desire for innovative, inclusive, and impactful approaches to fostering effective leaders.

Summarised views include:

• **Authenticity**. There is a need to promote versions of leadership that prioritise outcomes over personal image and media attention. Sincerity, authenticity, and transparency are emphasised as crucial aspects of leadership.

• **Help leaders let go**. There is a desire to support managers in becoming comfortable with emergent leadership within teams.

• **Acceleration of talent.** Identifying and incentivising individuals with strong leadership potential early in their careers is seen as important. Promoting and recognising leaders who may not promote themselves is considered important.

• **Rejuvenation.** The need for change and rejuvenation in the horticulture industry to attract and retain young talent is identified.

• **New approaches.** New approaches to leadership development, such as modular and learner-led programs, are proposed to make learning more impactful and less hierarchical.

• **Seasonality.** Timing of training programs should consider the seasonal demands of the food and fibre sector.

• **Diversity.** There is a need for more diversity in leadership, including professionals beyond farmers and growers.

• **Listening.** The voices and perspectives of those being led should be considered.

• **Scarcity.** Limited resources and the busy nature of the horticulture environment present challenges for leadership development.

• **Integration.** The importance of integrating leadership skills into all levels of learning is highlighted.

• **Collaboration.** Collaboration with existing leadership training organisations and industry leaders is encouraged. Leveraging existing resources and programs are seen as effective strategies for leadership development.

• **Learning journey.** Lifelong learning, practical experience, and natural human qualities are seen as valuable aspects of leadership. The role of lifelong learning and passion in developing leaders is emphasised.

• **Context.** Promoting contextual understanding of leadership including the need for leadership development in areas such as sales, marketing, and environmental sustainability is acknowledged.

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Table 2: Demographics of Respondents		Survey Responses	Total Response	
Participants	173	95	268	
Gender Distribution				
Male	76 (44%)	42 (44%)	118 (44%)	
Female	97 (56%)	53 (56%)	150 (56%)	
Non-Binary/Didn't say	0	0	0	
Geographic Distribution				
North Island	98 (57%)	53 (56%)	151 (56%)	
South Island	73 (42%)	42 (44%)	115 (43%)	
Reported New Zealand	2 (1%)	0	2 (1%)	
Age Distribution				
18-39	117 (67%)	51 (54%)	168 (63%)	
40-59	51 (30%)	35 (37%)	86 (32%)	
60+	5 (3%)	9 (9%)	14 (5%)	
Ethnic Distribution				
Fijian	1 (0.4%)			
New Zealander	3 (1.1%)			
Indian	7 (2.6%)			
Asian	9 (3.4%)			
Other European	15 (5.6%)			
Māori	32 (12%)			
NZ European	201 (75%)			
Role Distribution				
Hands-on (Students, graduates, farm cadets, kai mahi (food workers)	81 (47%)	20 (22%)	101 (38%)	First Report 15%
Operational (Managers)	56 (32%)	36 (39%)	92 (35%)	34%
High operational (GMs, Senior Managers)	25 (15%)	19 (20%)	44 (16%)	
Strategic (Governance and C-Suite)	11 (6%)	18 (19%)	29 (11%)	51%

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Any error or interpretation of their insights is solely the project team's. We are also very grateful to the organisations they serve in.

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