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A PATH TO REALISING LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL IN AOTEAROA NZ'S FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR

A leadership capability framework
April, 2024

FOOD & FIBRE CoVE
Learner-Focused, Industry-Led, Government-Enabled

RURAL LEADERS
Growing world-class leaders for our country

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Toku toa, he toa Rangatira
(My courage is one of chiefs who were my forebears)
—Whakataukī (Māori proverb)

Leaders need the courage to challenge the status quo, and the humility to acknowledge that they can only do so because they stand on the shoulders of those 'giants who have gone before'.

This research is a salute to those who have helped the sector reach this point and a humble further contribution to the field of leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector. It draws on the views of hundreds from across the sector, Western research and practice, and the holistic concepts that enrich Te Ao Māori and Pacific cultures. It doesn't pretend to be the last word on leadership—there is no such thing. At its heart, this work is about *people*.

In the following pages we meet real people on their leadership journeys (albeit with names removed to protect privacy). We hope their stories, including their mistakes, give you courage on your own leadership journey. A journey that will be deeply personal and, if you're serious about it, will last a lifetime.

Many have tried to define leadership. The father of transactional and transformational leadership theories James MacGregor Burns once said that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on Earth," which speaks to the difficulty of doing so.[1] However, when you find the leadership approach true to you, it will have a deeply personal resonance and be collectively transformative for the teams and purpose you serve. Therefore, leaders are encouraged to choose their own personal definition. What rings true for you?

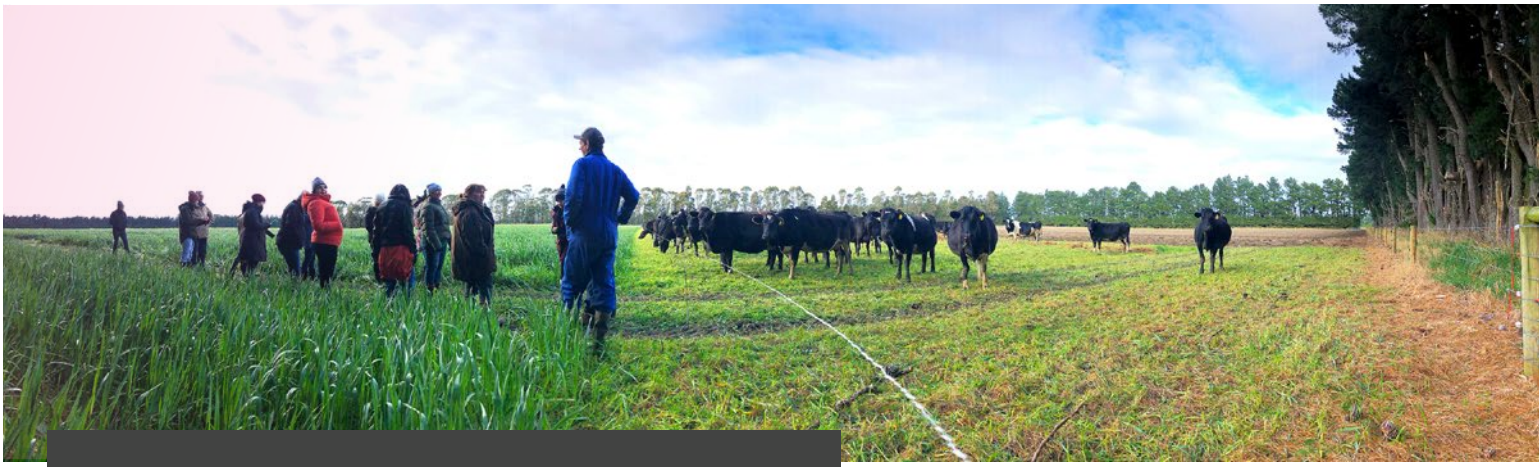
For its part, this research offers a principles-centred model for leading in Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector ('the sector'). The model has been drawn from hundreds of interviews, survey responses, and focus groups held across the sector.[2] It is what we in the sector have said is important to us. It is our model.

Based on the principles-centred leadership model, this research then builds a framework for developing leadership and high-performance teams as the fundamental building blocks of the sector's leadership development ecosystem.

The capability development framework is a first step in responding to a threefold challenge that came from within the sector:

- Our need to move beyond a leadership culture that worked in the past but is no longer optimised for our fast-changing world.
- A need to move beyond our ad hoc way of developing leadership to something more systemised. Something that is versatile enough to support the scale and breadth of the sector yet practical enough to help us grow the nation's prosperity.
- The need to embrace our rich bicultural foundations and be relevant to our modern multicultural context.

A leadership development ecosystem is something that has been missing in the sector since at least the deregulation of the 1980's. Ecosystems are formed by the dynamic interaction of a community–in this case, people–and their environment.[3] The concept of an ecosystem fits with the nature of the sector, which is a complex weave of industries and people connected to each other and Te Taiao (the natural world).



1 Burns, J. (1978). Leadership. Harper & Row, pp 1-2.
2 Refer to Appendix D.
3 Ecosystem. (2023, November 4). In Collins English Dictionary

Because of the variety, scale, and complexity of the sector, the challenge of leadership development would exceed any attempt to over-engineer a linear system, and no one organisation could reasonably control it. What we need is a living and growing ecosystem that people can interact with, use, leverage, adapt, and share, and yet has a common essence or wairua (spirit) we can connect with and spread across the way we work, how we make those we work with feel, and how we think of the future. Just as growing structures optimise fruit yield for an orchard, the leadership development ecosystem in this research provides a framework through which to grow opportunity and multiply the potential of the sector.

The good news is that the sector has an abundance of talented and committed people. All we need now is a unified concept of what we as a sector mean by 'leadership', what we want from our leaders, and what is needed to develop them. That is the purpose of this work. It is for everyone interested in leadership's difficult and extraordinary journey. It is also particularly relevant to those designing leadership programmes and those designing our qualifications and capability development system. It is divided into three parts.

• Part 1: Why we lead–begins with a brief introduction to the sector and its history. It then discusses the changing world of work and the workforce, and the ways in which an evolution in our approaches to leadership can benefit our people, our economy, and the natural world.

• Part 2: How we lead–addresses the qualities of effective leadership and opens the door to a new principles-centred leadership model made of three elements: context, principles, and dimensions.

• Part 3: How we grow leadership–introduces the leadership development ecosystem that provides a framework for better systemising how the sector develops a continual flow of prepared leaders to step into ever more impactful leadership roles. At an individual level, it also invites you to consider how your own leadership, and the skills of those around you, can be grown through personal discovery and development.

PART 1. WHY WE LEAD

CHAPTER 1—THE FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR

This chapter outlines the make-up and history of the sector and the changing leadership challenges it faces.

WHAT IS THE FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR?

The Food and Fibre sector includes 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.[4] It extends to include insurers, agri-tech businesses, policy makers and educators, meaning improvements to leadership will have profound impacts throughout our population and economy.

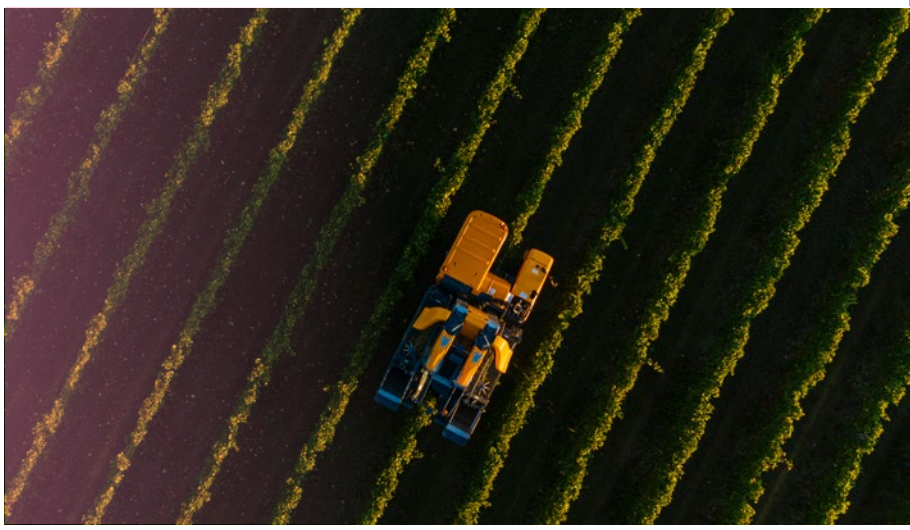


Photo credit: Andy King

A BRIEF HISTORY

As a Food and Fibre exporting nation, Aotearoa New Zealand prospers when its Food and Fibre sector is performing.

The sector had its origins when Māori first settled Aotearoa and established gardening, hunting, and fishing systems. It took another leap when iron tools, plants and domestic animals arrived in the late 1700's. In the early 1800's, many Māori travelled overseas, bringing back modern European methods of farming to augment those they had adopted from early settlers. Māori agriculture expanded in the mid-1800's from subsistence gardening to successful commercial farming. Our first exports began in earnest with Māori selling grain and potatoes to New South Wales.[5] This set the stage for Aotearoa New Zealand's emergence as a leading agricultural nation.

When the first refrigerated meat was exported in 1882, farming quickly became the economic backbone of the country, and the government incentivised pioneer farmers to 'break the country in', ushering in the 'great pastoral era'.[6] However, Māori ability to participate in the new farming economy suffered badly due to land confiscations following the 1860-1870's New Zealand Wars. Today, with smart leadership, and as claims under Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Waitangi Treaty) are being redressed, Māori are again a strong and growing force in the sector. In 2021, Māori agribusiness was valued at over $13 billion, which includes at least 40 percent of the national fishing quota,[7] and is establishing new export channels based on Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge and wisdom).[8] For instance, protection of plant variety rights for our country was enhanced when the European Union accepted Mānuka as a geographic indication and a cultural taonga (treasure) in the recent Free Trade Agreement.

Deregulation of the New Zealand economy in the 1980's was another key moment in the sector's history. We lost our main export market when the United Kingdom joined the Common Market (now the European Union).

As a result, our highly regulated economy started to buckle. In response, the New Zealand economy was radically restructured, and farming subsidies were removed, forcing much-needed change. The survivors of deregulation learned to be lean and highly productive. As a result, our primary industries have consistently been the most productive of all our country's sectors.[9] We believe ourselves to be one of the most efficient Food and Fibre producing nations in the world.[10]

Productivity growth peaked in the decade following deregulation and has been subdued since then.[11] 40 years on, the weaknesses hidden within deregulation can be seen. One of those was a free market approach to talent development, which continues to impact the sector's approach to leadership.

4 **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
5 **Export NZ, (2024),** New Zealand Exporting Timeline. **https://exportnz.org.nz/about/our-history/**
6 **Te Ara, The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Story:** Farming in the Economy, **https://teara.govt.nz/en/farming-in-the-economy**
7 **Fishers New Zealand, (2023),** Mahere Takahuritanga Ahumahi Hao Ika Fisheries Industry Transformation Plan DRAFT for consultation, p. 9
8 **Our Land and Water, (August 2021),** How Māori Agribusiness is Leading Aotearoa's Farming Future. **https://ourlandandwater.nz/news/how-maori-agribusiness-is-leading-aotearoas-farming-future/**
9 **New Zealand Productivity Commission (2021),** Productivity by the numbers, p. 43.
10 **Dalziel, P., et al.,** The New Zealand Food and Fibre Sector: A Situational Analysis.
11 **New Zealand Productivity Commission (2021),** p. 24.

CHAPTER 2—THE CHANGING LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

From the 1980's to 2000's, with more people available than jobs, organisations brought in already-trained talent rather than train talent themselves. Like a farm with good fertiliser history, this worked for a while. We benefited from the capabilities that had been built up from years of government and industry training, but we did not keep up our 'fertiliser applications'. Today, those who learned under the old system, and those they directly mentored, are now in senior leadership or moving into retirement, and we are starting to see gaps in our leadership pipeline.

Today's sector has many pockets of exceptional performance, but the symptoms of sub-optimal leadership behaviours are also widespread. The statistics speak for themselves.

The sector struggles to attract sufficient talent.[12] It faces some of the highest industry talent-loss rates of any sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, losing 71 percent of new entrants every three years.[13] The sector has high internal staff churn: as an example, the dairy sector has 20-50 percent attrition per year.[14] It is littered with low-margin businesses that are often under-capitalised. Even though it is more productive than other sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand, productivity is often based on sheer hard work.[15] People in the sector suffer relatively high rates of stress and injury, and in the worst cases this leads to loss of life, including by suicide.[16] Formal education levels in the sector are low compared to other sectors.[17]

These symptoms are correlated with challenges to the sector's social licence, higher-than-necessary environmental impacts, increasing regulation, and difficulty in adapting at the required speed and scale.

At the same time, the world as we knew it has changed, and is continuing to change in unpredictable ways. Our sector needs to 're-fertilise and re-grass' its leadership development approach if we are to thrive through the changes that are upon us.

A CHANGING WORLD

The globalised system that Aotearoa New Zealand relies on for its export trade is being challenged and rede-fined in the face of rising international tensions. At the same time, the cyclic and human-made realities of climate change are impacting the sector, our communities, and the expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

The sector now faces an operating environment that is what commentators call volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). In a VUCA era, risks evolve and interact with each other, often in unpredictable ways.[18]

In this era, we need leaders with resilience, a strong natural curiosity and an enterprising mindset who can lead their teams successfully through constant change, rather than leaders with a managerial approach who try to optimise for an old world that is no longer with us.

12 **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
13 **Export NZ, (2024),** New Zealand Exporting Timeline. **https://exportnz.org.nz/about/our-history/**
14 **Te Ara, The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Story:** Farming in the Economy, **https://teara.govt.nz/en/farming-in-the-economy**
15 **Fishers New Zealand, (2023),** Mahere Takahuritanga Ahumahi Hao Ika Fisheries Industry Transformation Plan DRAFT for consultation, p. 9
16 "The agriculture, forestry, and fishing industry had the highest incidence rate of work-related injury claims in 2020, with 188 claims per 1,000 FTEs. This is up from a rate of 180 claims per 1,000 FTEs in 2019." NZ Stats. **https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/injury-statistics-work-related-claims-2020/**
17 **Dalziel, P., et al, p 16.**
18 The term VUCA is an acronym based on the leadership theories of Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus. The US Army War College popularised the concept in 1987. **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VUCA**

Adding to our leadership challenge is a growing global shortage of talent. While periodic economic downturns and automation might provide temporary relief, the long-run reality is, the plentiful labour born of the baby boomer generation is gone. Even the youngest in this cohort are now approaching retirement age and baby boomers are being replaced by numerically smaller cohorts of Generations X, Millennial, and Z.

At the same time, the diversity of our workforce is increasing. Māori, Pacific Peoples, and Asian populations are predicted to be 50 percent of the sector's working age population by 2043, compared with 37 percent in 2018. Much of this growth will come from immigration, meaning many workers will not have been born in Aotearoa New Zealand.[19]

In addition, 84 percent of New Zealanders live in urban centres.[20] The statistical reality of urbanisation is that tomorrow's farmers, fishers, and growers will need to be drawn from places like Auckland and Christchurch rather than Eketahuna and Ettrick, and these people will be initially less culturally attuned to rural and remote living. As the workforce changes, all leaders will need to increase their cultural competency if they are going to inspire a more diverse workforce.

In short, Aotearoa New Zealand's workforce is getting smaller (relative to population), more urban, more diverse, and older. The impact for leaders is that their workers will need and expect different standards and will have more choice over who they wish to work with, and how long they wish to stay in a particular job.

As Aotearoa New Zealand changes, Food and Fibre leaders need to be ahead of the change and lead our people through it. If we do this well, we will be more unified, we will see and understand each other better, and we will be well placed to hold true to our national identity while showing manaaki (hospitality and consideration) to new immigrants to whom our whenua (land) has called to–just as it did for us or our forebears.

Figure 1:
New Zealand workforce 1980—2100

(Adapted from PopulationPyramid.net)

19 National labour force projections: 2020 (base)–2073 (2021, June 10). In NZ Stats. https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-labour-force-projections-2020base-2073
20 Urban-rural profile (2023 November 04). In Massey University, Environmental Health Intelligence. https://www.ehinz.ac.nz/indicators/population-vulnerability/urbanrural-profile/#most-people-live-in-main-urban-areas

A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

From a leadership perspective, there have been four major technological ages.

The first is the manual, Pre-industrial Age, where leadership was held by the privileged few, and workers were mainly used for manual labour.

The second is the Industrial Age, which began at the end of the 18th century, and where the leadership challenge was to manage mechanised workforces. Workers were treated *en masse* as human resources alongside natural resources and capital. In that era, people were valued more for their productivity than their humanity.

The Information Age, from the mid-20th century, brought about a transformation. Mass education meant leaders had to engage an educated and skilled workforce. While people were, and still are, referred to as human resources, workers saw themselves as equals, no longer a 'class-below', and they wanted to be led through inspiration and individualised consideration rather than by the out-dated transactional approaches sufficient in the past.

Now in the early part of the 21st century, we are entering the Age of Artificial Intelligence, and the leadership challenge is changing again. As robots and algorithms begin to think for themselves, the unique value of people will be their humanity. Our new leadership challenge is to foster the significance of authentic human bonds, harnessing qualities like creativity, emotional intelligence, and character.

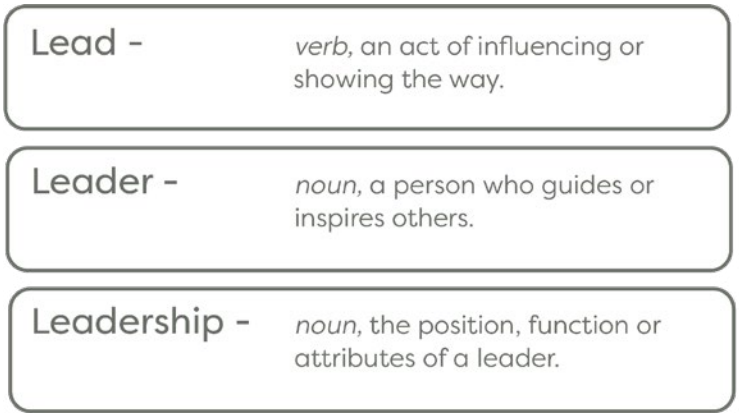
In short, in the age of muscle power, workers were treated as beasts of burden; when we industrialised, people were treated as machines; when we computerised, people were valued for their knowledge. Now as machines become more human, it is the leaders who can tap into their team's essence, and need for meaning, that will result in a committed workforce in an era where people have choice over who they work with, and what purpose they serve.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Solutions to address the changing world of work are multi-faceted and multi-generational. Yet at the heart of every solution are leaders who unlock the creative potential of their teams and organisations. To that end, the sector needs a deep bench of high-performing leaders at every level.

The term 'lead' is a verb that describes the act of influencing.[21] 'Leader' is a noun that describes a person who guides or inspires others. Often leaders are in control or in charge of a group of people or an organisation, but not necessarily. We'll come back to this. 'Leadership' is a noun that describes the position, office, and attributes of a leader. (Again, we encourage leaders to find more specific definitions that are true to them to help guide their own practices.) It can also be used in the context of a system, e.g., a 'leadership development system'. Corporate farmers like Pāmu have well established leadership systems, which are essentially frameworks that set the culture and performance expectations of their leaders, and those who aspire to leadership roles within their organisation.

Figure 2:
Lead, Leader, Leadership



(Adapted from the Collins Dictionary)

LEADING

We all influence others, and in doing so, we all lead. This does not require a position of authority—far from it. At its heart, leading is simply the communication of ideas, feelings, or example-setting behaviours that others see the value of and then adopt. The more engaged we are, the more we know, care, and feel like we belong, the more we can lead. In the most successful teams, everyone leads. In high-performing teams, everybody is supporting and challenging their teammates and contributing to the team purpose. Leading in this context happens at every level and multiple times every day. In exercising personal influence, individuals are more likely to be successful if they understand the operating context, have good relationships with their teammates and, ideally, with those in leadership roles.

21 **Lead. (2023, November 4).** In Collins English Dictionary. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/lead

LEADERSHIP

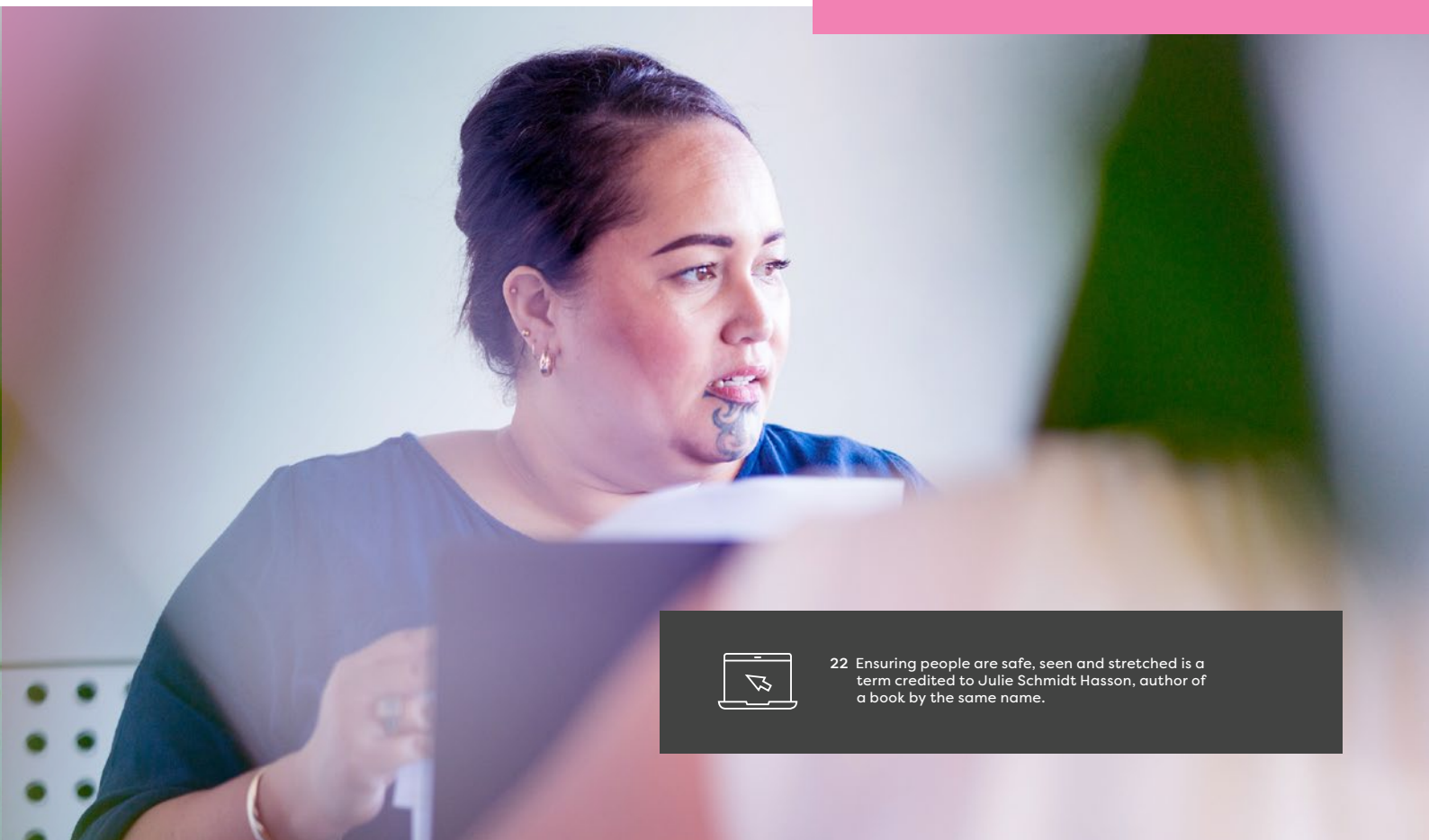
While leadership roles involve leading, they also embody several other responsibilities. Rangatira mahi (the work of leadership) is to bring a group of people together and weave them into a team. It also involves taking accountability for the behaviours and performance of the team while having the courage to share responsibility and authority with them. When this occurs, the individual potential of the team members and the collective potential of the team is unleashed.

Leadership is not a right. People are not good leaders just because they are the loudest, the wealthiest, from a family with mana whakaheke (inherited status), have gone to a good school or university, or even because they have great technical skills or a long history in an organisation. Ultimately, leadership is a privilege that, in its truest form, is bestowed on the leader by those who entrust their lives and livelihoods to them. Therefore, there is also a distinction between a boss and a leader. While every boss holds a leadership office or position, 'bossing' is different from leading. Bosses direct. Leaders inspire.

MANAGING VERSUS LEADING

Both managing and leading are vital to the success of the sector. They are interconnected but different disciplines. We manage things and systems, and we lead people. Great managers optimise the status quo; they find ways to organise operations and drive efficiency. By contrast, great leaders have people and the future at heart. They ensure people feel "safe, seen, and stretched," [22] and they have the courage to challenge *what is* in the pursuit of *what could be*. To be successful in a leadership role you need to be able to manage things and lead people.

You don't manage people. You manage things. You lead people.
Rear Admiral Grace Hopper, US Navy.



22 Ensuring people are safe, seen and stretched is a term credited to Julie Schmidt Hasson, author of a book by the same name.

CHAPTER 4—WHY DOES LEADERSHIP MATTER?

THE UTILITY AND VALUE OF LEADERSHIP

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

LEADERSHIP AS A MULTIPLIER

People's lives and livelihoods are disproportionately impacted, for good or bad, by the influence of leadership or the lack of it. In some cases, this impact can echo down through generations. For instance, Oskar Schindler saved thousands of Jews from the Nazi holocaust. Today many thousands of descendants live because of his moral stand. In the best cases, lives and livelihoods thrive because of leadership's multiplier effect. In the worst cases, lives and livelihoods do not survive.

The impacts of destructive leadership.

The worst leaders are despotic—the opposite of what we promote in this work. Despotic leaders are driven by self-interest and seek power, dominance, and superiority. Common characteristics of such leaders are arrogance, manipulation, and selfishness.[23] Their tools are fear, division, and control. These leaders violate the legitimate interests of the organisation and people they serve. They drain the energy of both, in service of themselves and set people against each other.

The absence of leadership can be toxic too. According to the Korn Ferry Institute, absence of leadership is more common than we think. Employees are seven times more likely to report absentee leadership than any other type of destructive leadership behaviour.[24]

What is present and absent everywhere and never seen? Absentee leadership.
Dr Laura McHale, Korn Ferry Institute.

If we are honest, the sector's statistics on workforce churn, stress, burnout, suicide, and injury tell a story of a leadership culture with room to improve.

23 Khizar, H., Tareen, A., Mohelska, H., Arif, F., Hanaysha, J., Akhtar, U., (2023), Bad bosses and despotism at workplace: A systematic review of the despotic leadership literature, Heliyon, Volume 9, Issue 9
24 McHale Dr L., (2022), Where's the Boss?, Korn Ferry Institute, p. 1. https://www.kornferry.com/content/dam/kornferry-v2/pdf/institute/KFI_Absentee-Leadership_1222022-final.pdf.

Photo credit: Matt Hampton

The potential of good leadership

Because the sector makes such an outsized contribution to our country's economic, environmental, and social wellbeing, a small increase in leadership capability can have a disproportionately positive impact on the well-being and wealth of the nation and our rural communities. To illustrate, a Gallup survey of 112,000 businesses across 96 countries found that engaged teams are 23% more profitable than non-engaged teams.[25]

Lifting Food and Fibre export profits by even 1% would earn our country an additional $543 million per year. To put this in context, $543 million is double what we earned from the Arable sector in 2023.[26] Therefore, it pays to lead well, fostering a culture of better leaders at all levels.

CHAPTER 5—DEVELOPING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP CULTURE

CULTURE

What is culture?

According to author Bill Marklein, your work culture is how your peoples' "hearts and stomachs feel about Monday morning on Sunday night."[27] World-leading researcher on culture, Edgar Schein, says "if we don't understand [cultural] forces, we become victim to them."[28]

Others have added that "culture is a group phenomenon...anchored in the interactions between people."[29] It is "the attitudes, feelings, values, and behaviour that characterise and inform society as a whole or any social group within it."[30] Because culture evolves from practices that have historically worked and have since become core to our identity, it is hard to change quickly. Culture tends to be as much a product of a group of people as it is the thing that steers them.

Core to the sector's identity is the echo of hardy pioneers, both Māori and European, who from virgin landscape forged a thriving farming, fishing, and growing tradition. Today, the sector, built on the backs of pioneers, still celebrates the grit of *self-reliant producers and harvesters* who stoically battle their domain to produce our bounty.

Culture must keep up with the changing context. One of leadership's roles is to step back from the familiar and ask if their culture is still relevant. The demands on the sector are becoming more complex; transparency requires increasing professionalisation; and increasing capital requirements mean that the *'heroic producer or harvester'* cannot do it by themselves or in the ways they historically could. It is time to bring another strand of our identity to the fore, collective culture.

Cooperation is the antidote to complexity. This is an old wisdom, in their time our forebears also faced challenges that required collective effort. It is why cooperatives are so strongly represented in the sector. Perhaps the keys to our future are found in the clues of our past.

To future-proof ourselves, the sector needs to embrace a high-performing leadership culture that is grounded in shared values and a spirit of open innovation that ignites and empowers our people to build great teams. So, they in turn, grow great products, businesses, and communities.[31]

The antidote to complexity is cooperation.

25 **Gallup, (2022),** State of the Global Workplace 2022 Report The Voice of the World's Employees, 2022, p. 6. https://www.cca-global.com/content/latest/article/2023/05/state-of-the-global-workplace-2022-report-346/
26 **Ministry for Primary Industries (December 2023),** Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries, p. 10. https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/60526-Situation-and-Outlook-for-Primary-Industries-SOPI-December-2023
27 **Marklein, B., (2023).** In Employ Humanity LLC. https://www.employhumanity.com/culture-is-how-employees-hearts-and-stomachs-feel-about-monday-morning-on-sunday
28 **Schein, E.H. (2004),** Organizational culture and leadership, 3rd ed., The Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint, p. 3.
29 **Winsborough, D. (2021, December 4).** How to really, really manage culture, Stuff. https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/prosper/300469740/how-to-really-really-manage-culture
30 **Culture. (2023, November 4).** In Collins English Dictionary.
31 This was one of the findings from a High-Performance Workshop, with over 40 industry leaders, hosted by PwC, Lincoln University and the New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust at Christchurch on 08 November 2021.

COMBATTING INERTIA

A challenge the sector faces in building progression is that it is made up of many small to medium businesses which are often owner-operated. For instance, self-employment in the sector is approximately three times the national average.[32] This means unless the business is growing (and many suffer from slim margins) there is limited movement in leadership roles. This creates a dynamic where people are employed for their technical competence and, if there is any personal development offered, it tends to be for bite-sized technical upskilling rather than people skills.

Another challenge to building team capacity is a fear for owners of smaller enterprises, that if they make their employee more valuable, they might lose them to the business down the road. Besides the disruption caused, the first-year cost of replacing a worker on minimum wage can be up to 45 percent of their salary (i.e. almost $25,000).[33]

Few people stay in one organisation forever. Leaders are likely to lose team members over time due to general attrition, changes of lifestyle and goals, the availability of better offers, and so on. So, the question business owners need to ask is: What is worse, investing in people, and they leave—or not investing in them, and they stay? There is also a question for industry-bodies and government, should they do more to invest in sector-wide leadership progression pathways?

32 Nationally, 10 percent of the workforce are self-employed; in pastoral farming this is between 28-30 percent. Ministry for Primary Industries (2021), Food and Fibre Workforce Snapshot, p. 19.
33 See the business.govt.nz calculator, Available at: **https://www.business.govt.nz/employeecostcalculator/**

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

People and organisations behave their way into culture change: they can't discuss their way into it. At a personal level, leaders need to adapt their core leadership behaviours, over the course of their leadership journeys, to increasingly complex roles. At a sector level, if Aotearoa New Zealand is to remain at the global forefront of Food and Fibre producing nations and shoulder its kaitiakitanga (guardianship) responsibilities to society and the environment: we need talent progression pathways that grow the behaviours we want and those that suit the sector's diversity and scale.

Each person's leadership journey will be different, so progression pathways also need to be flexible. Traditional leadership development models are designed for people to 'rise through the ranks', (sometimes called vertical progression). This forces leaders to become 'generalists' with responsibilities spanning multiple functional or specialist areas. By overvaluing 'rank' progression as shorthand for success, we undervalue the role and importance of other forms of progression that allow people to excel in their true passions. This model is not sufficient for the sector, which is a rich blend of self-employed business owners, small to medium enterprises (SMEs), not-for-profit entities, industry-good bodies, iwi organisations, corporates, cooperatives, and public service entities, all of which frequently transect local and global interests.[34]

The sector needs a leadership development ecosystem that allows people the freedom to choose their own path along, and between, two broad pathways: generalist and specialist. Generalist progression leads to highly visible roles at the apex of organisations. Equally vital to the progress of the sector are our specialists who seek deep expertise. Between these two axes is the versatile middle, which is where most people find fulfilment—and is where we find the sector's core strength. Research also shows that leadership is exercised at three broad levels, regardless of the progression pathway followed.

The three levels of leadership are 'strategic', 'operational', and 'field' (or tactical). They are used widely around the world and are equally relevant to the sector. Briefly, strategy is a 'theory of success'[35] created by an organisation or team so they can be leaders *of* their field. At the strategic level, leadership is focused on generating value and, in a commercial context, creating competitive advantage. The operational level of leadership is about analysing, organising, and systemising for success. Operational leaders connect strategy and action. Field level leadership occurs at the frontline of organisations. Field level leaders lead *in* their field to generate the actions required for success.

Participants in our research identified development gaps at every level. This is consistent with Zenger and Folkman's international research of 17,000 leaders, which showed most supervisors operate in leadership roles for over a decade before being trained in leadership.[36]

Part 3 outlines a leadership development ecosystem that includes progression and capability development frameworks. But first, let's consider how we truly lead well.

PART 2. HOW WE LEAD

34 The highest levels of self-employment within the workforce are found in the production sections of both the dairy sector (28 percent) and red meat and wool sector (30 percent). This is compared to the national average of 10 percent. Ministry for Primary Industries (2021), Food and Fibre Workforce Snapshot, p. 19.

35 **Meiser, J., (2016),** Ends+Ways+Means=(Bad) Strategy, Parameters 46, no. 4, p. 86. **https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3000&context=parameters**

36 **Zenger, J., (December 2017),** We Wait Too Long to Train Our Leaders, Harvard Business Review. **https://hbr.org/2012/12/why-do-we-wait-so-long-to-trai**

Photo credit: Dan 'Maxy' Max

CHAPTER 6 - PRINCIPLES-CENTRED LEADERSHIP MODEL

In this chapter, we outline the Principles-centred Leadership Model developed from research in the Food and Fibre sector.

The Principles-centred Leadership Model has three major elements:

Element One: Context

- significance to Aotearoa NZ
- enterprising mindset
- grounded nature

Element Two: Principles

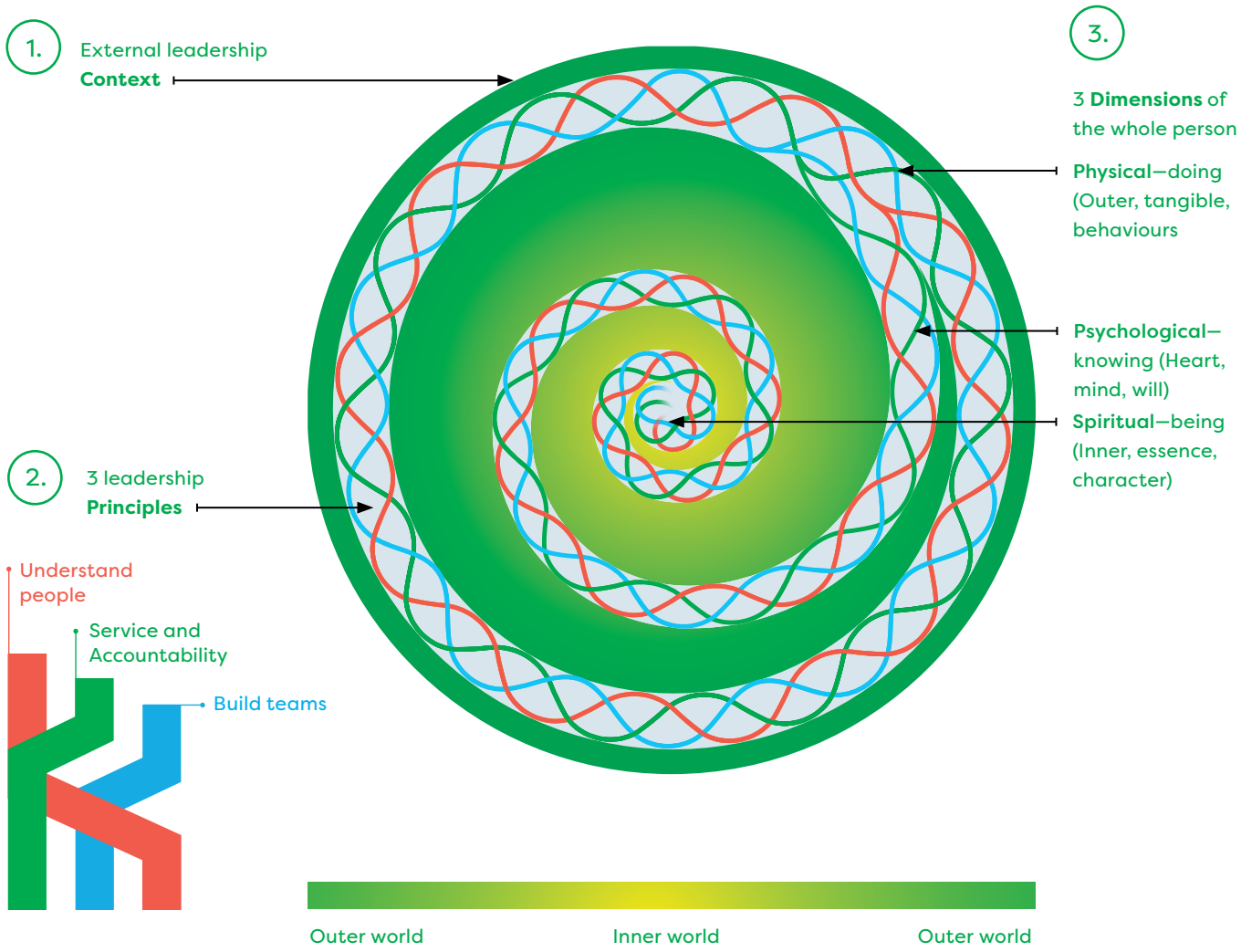
- understand people
- service and accountability
- build teams

Element Three: Dimensions

- physical
- psychological
- spiritual

The model takes leaders on a personal journey: it makes them aware of the environmental **context** of leading in the sector, then adds three **principles** of leading, which are practiced through the three **dimensions** of the *whole* person. Each element in the model (**context, principles,** and **dimensions**) can be considered separately. But the power of the model is when they are applied together, just as strands of muka (flax prepared for weaving) are stronger when woven into a rope.

Figure 3:
Principles-centred leadership model



Central and running through the model are three leadership **principles** (and their **sub-principles**) that people in the sector have said are important to them. The principles are depicted as a triple helix or woven muka and inlaid into the spiral pattern that forms the structure of the model. Each principle has a specific role that compliments the others. Principle 1: Understand people—is at the heart of the leader's craft—people are why and for whom we lead. Principle 2: Service and accountability—guards the leader and those they lead from the dark side of leadership (touched on in chapter 4). Principle 3: Build teams—is the way we lead—we work better when we work together.

The spiral itself depicts the three **dimensions** of the *whole* person. The model invites people to go beyond leading from their physical (outer, tangible, behavioural) and psychological dimensions (head, heart, and will), to look deeply within, to their spiritual dimension (inner, essence, and character). When people incorporate all three dimensions, they can lead as a *whole* person, drawing from *all* three parts of themselves. They do this in the context of their external leadership environment, or outer world.

The outer world, beyond the person, incorporates the concept of waiora (our connectedness with the natural environment, our relationship with whānau (family)) as well as the specific **context** of leading in the sector.

We lead best when we find alignment between our innermost world (being), our humanity (knowing) and our outer world (doing)—this is leading in its most true form. When we are true to ourselves we can truly lead and therefore unleash our fullest potential and ability to create resonance and positive impact.

Meaning behind the model

Grounded in our reciprocal relationship with nature, the Food and Fibre sector is about growing plants, animals, and people. To illustrate this concept, the model fuses cultural and biological imagery. It uses two primary symbols: spirals and the helix. Spirals are seen throughout nature and across cultures. They often represent life cycles, growth and symbolise life's journey. In Māori design two interlocking spirals are called raperape, which represent energy and movement. Spirals and helix patterns[37] also have an ancient association with Celtic art and appear in many other cultures too.

The helix shape typically symbolises resilience and life. It is found throughout nature, including in the DNA of every living organism, and contains the instructions needed for all living things to develop, survive, and reproduce. The colours used in the model are blue, green, and red-brown, representing the oceans, plants, and earth.

In short, the symbology in this model illustrates the interwoven concepts of leadership and the path each leader must navigate as they seek to positively impact their environment and those they lead.

CONTEXT

The Context of the sector is the first element of the principles-centred leadership model and is what we now discuss.

37 Formed by an intricate weave of interlaced knots.

There are many cross-cutting characteristics of leading and leadership common to all sectors and segments of society. Yet the sector also has many unique attributes that distinguish it, and the people within it, from other sectors, and that provide a **context** Food and Fibre leaders need to connect with if they are to be effective. It is important to note the context is alive, evolving with time and changing social and cultural needs. The best leaders see beyond the horizon and lead those they serve through contextual change for the purpose of a thriving future. This research highlights three contextual factors of significance to the sector identified during our research (2022 – 2024):

- The significance of the sector to Aotearoa New Zealand.
- The enterprising DNA that energises the sector.
- The grounded nature of its people, their mahi (work) and Te Taiao (the natural world).

SIGNIFICANCE

The Food and Fibre sector has huge social and economic significance in Aotearoa New Zealand. According to the Reserve Bank, as a nation we are "more reliant on the sector compared with most other advanced economies".[38] The sector accounts for 82 percent of our country's merchandise exports, exceeding the exports of non-primary industries for eight of the last 10 years.[39] We are globally renowned for the quality of our produce, which appears in all the major economies of the world. In short, our Food and Fibre exports fuel Aotearoa New Zealand's economic engine.

The sector also employs over 360,000 people, around 14 percent of our total workforce, and in some regions, the percentage is much higher.[40] These people are often sparsely distributed across more than half of our land mass and harvest fish from the global oceans.

The sector creates the bulk of Aotearoa New Zealand's export revenue, so creating pathways for people to develop and take on increasing responsibility can have a multiplier effect on the nation's future prosperity that goes beyond the impact of leadership systems that other sectors can create.

ENTERPRISING

One hallmark of the sector is the enterprising nature of its people. It takes entrepreneurial spirit to deal with the risks of working the land and sea and the volatility of investing in nature-based solutions.

Entrepreneurialism is often thought of as wealth generation. However, entrepreneurial leadership skills can also create social and environmental value. Entrepreneurial orientation is defined as innovativeness, proactiveness, and willingness to pursue purposeful risk-taking.[41] According to research by Navendu Nidhan and Basant Kumar Singh, "entrepreneurial leaders are motivated by a desire to build social, cultural, and economic opportunities. They are not discouraged by a lack of resources or uncertainty; rather, these challenges inspire them."[42]

A leadership ecosystem that promotes entrepreneurial leadership skills is essential in the context of the sector and aligns with the can-do attitude that the 2023 Mackenzie Study identified as playing a "crucial role in creating economic, social, and environmental outcomes."[43]

GROUNDED

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 sector given it is also deeply connected to the earth and oceans. Food and Fibre leaders need to be grounded in four ways:

Grounded in nature

At its heart, the sector has a reciprocal relationship with Te Taiao (the natural world) that is deeply bound to nature's seasonal rhythms and changing weather patterns. The sector operates at the intersection of nature, human sustainment, and economic systems. 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, their home, work, and identity are entwined, almost as if they belong to the land and the water and not the other way around. In a Te Ao Māori context, tangata whenua (people of the land) have a kinship to the natural world, as descendants of Ranginui and Papatūānuku.

Practically orientated

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 with can-do attitudes. They're straight-up, and often candid. The sector tends to reject people who act like "top sh*t", as one interviewee described it. The people who work the land and water tend to prefer practical, humble, straightforward leaders who are competent and have a purposeful passion for providing life-sustaining Food and Fibre.

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 sector's workforce are changing. Leaders must be bi-culturally grounded—mindful of our nation's founding Te Tiriti partnership between Māori and British under the Crown—and be able to lead competently within a multicultural context. To this end, it is important for leaders to understand common cultural processes, such as powhiri, mihi whakatau, karakia and tangihanga, and the role they are expected to play in these. Leaders don't need to be cultural experts themselves. But they do need to know who to turn to and when they should engage. As a baseline, leaders should know their own pepeha and a mihi.[44]

Community-minded

The sector is roughly 13 percent of the nation's workforce,[45] and yet it is distributed over more than 50 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand's land area,[46] and harvests fish from the world's fourth largest exclusive economic zone.[47] In this sparsely populated and physically demanding environment, leaders bridge physical isolation by fostering community spirit. This is evidenced in a recent study that found volunteering is highest in rural New Zealand (58 percent compared to 47 percent in major urban centres).[48]

38 **Reserve Bank of New Zealand, (2023, 26 October),** 'Farmers Facing Heightened Challenges'. Retrieved from **https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/hub/news/2023/10/farmers-facing-heightened-challenges**
39 **Ministry for Primary Industries (June 2023),** Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries, p. 4. **https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/57298-Situation-and-Outlook-for-Primary-Industries-SOPI-June-2023.**
40 Ibid.
41 **Berg, N., Choe, L., Parsons, C., Rogers, L., Gow, H., Dance, L., and Hampton, M., (2023).** The Mackenzie Study: A Cross-sectional Study of Nuffield and Kellogg Scholars Entrepreneurial Skills, University of Otago, pp. 10 & 25. **https://ruralleaders.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Mackenzie-Study_1-6-23-1.pdf.**
42 With some notable exceptions, including Rocket Apples and Kiwifruit Gold.
43 **Berg N., et al., (2023).**
44 Powhiri, mihi whakatau, karakia, tangihanga and pepeha are important cultural practices and ceremonies in Māori culture. Powhiri is a traditional welcome ceremony. Mihi whakatau involves speeches, songs, and other expressions of welcome. Karakia are prayers, they are often recited at the beginning or end of gatherings. Tangihanga are funeral ceremonies or mourning processes. A Pepeha is the traditional form of introduction or a way of expressing one's identity and connection to specific places, ancestors, and tribal affiliations.
45 **Ministry for Primary Industries (December 2022),** Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries, p.6.
46 **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/**
47 **Coriolis, (June 2023),** New Zealand Situation & Capabilities Emerging and future platforms in New Zealand's bioeconomy, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, p. 16. New Zealand situation and capabilities: Emerging and future platforms in New Zealand's bioeconomy (mbie.govt.nz).
48 Go, J., (2023). State of Volunteering Regional Report Volunteering in New Zealand's Regions 2023, Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, p. 4. **https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/research/volunteering-higher-in-rural-new-zealand/**

CHAPTER 8—ELEMENT TWO: PRINCIPLES

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 highlighted the following three principles for leading and leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector. They are:

- understand people
- service and accountability
- build teams.

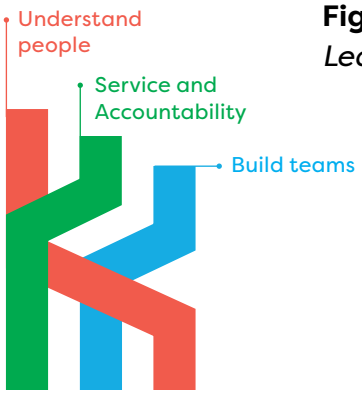


Figure 4:
Leadership Principles

Chapters 9-11 explore the three main **principles** above. Each of these **principles** represent a strand, which in turn has inner strands or **sub-principles.** When woven together, each strand multiplies the effect of the others.

Principle 1: Understand people covers the foundation of developing others, with three sub-principles:

1.1 – know self

1.2 – know others

1.3 – build relationships

Principle 2: Service and accountability covers what it means to serve and to be accountable to others as a leader, plus the need for resilience and courage. There are two sub-principles:

2.1 – service

2.2 – accountability

Principle 3: Build teams covers how to build teams in which people thrive.

There are three **sub-principles:**

3.1 – belonging

3.2 – autonomy

3.3 – purpose

In chapter 12 we build on the concept of teaming and explore how to build high-performing teams.

It is important to note that these three core **principles,** and their corresponding **sub-principles,** are connected and intertwined. As mentioned in Chapter 6, each principle has a specific role that compliments the others. That said, they are not perfectly discreet from each other, and there are multiple examples, stories and explanations throughout this research that could fit under more than one **principle** or **sub-principle.** What's important, is the general understanding of the concepts across the three **principles.**

CHAPTER 9—PRINCIPLE ONE: UNDERSTAND PEOPLE

People are at the heart of the leader's craft. This first strand of the helix has three sub-strands, or sub-principles:

1.1 - Know self: Leadership starts with knowing, growing, and leading yourself. To find the truth within is a life's journey, it is hard work, and it takes real humility. But if you cannot lead yourself, you cannot hope to lead other people.

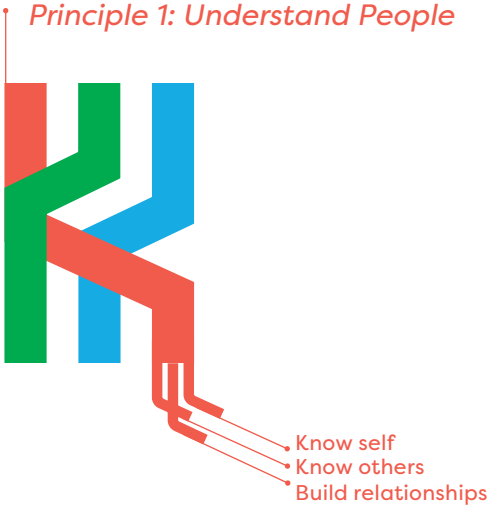
1.2 - Know others: Leaders also need to see and understand others, their drivers, hopes, and fears, as well as their unique gifts. One of the greatest gifts a leader can give is to show belief in another, even before that person can see it in themselves.

1.3 - Build relationships: Leaders build a bridge between themselves and other people. To do this, leaders build trust, get alongside their people, and do more than just communicate—they connect. At its best, connecting is akin to creating a sense of family, this is the Māori value of whakawhanaungatanga.[49] 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.

To quote the late Maria Ngātai,

"Leadership is not just about relationships, it is all about relationships."

Figure 5:
Principle 1: Understand People



PRINCIPLE 1.1—KNOW SELF

As the leader, we are our first team member. So, leading ourselves is our first leadership responsibility. Knowing ourselves is a big ask, because it means exploring what it is that makes us tick—to know what brings us happiness or what the real causes of our frustrations and fears are, to understand the events in our past that contribute to our feelings, to differentiate between things that give us strength and those that cause grief.

When we know our personality traits and learn to use our emotional and reasoning brains together,[50] we are on the path to knowing ourselves and to appreciating the differences between us and others.

49 whaka – to cause to be; whanaunga – relation or family member; tanga – suffix added to nouns to designate the quality derived from the base noun.
50 Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman expands on this in his bestselling book Thinking Fast and Slow **(Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2011)**
51 Such as the Strengths Profile (Cappfinity), CliftonStrengths (Gallup), Daria Williamson's Strengths Deck among others.

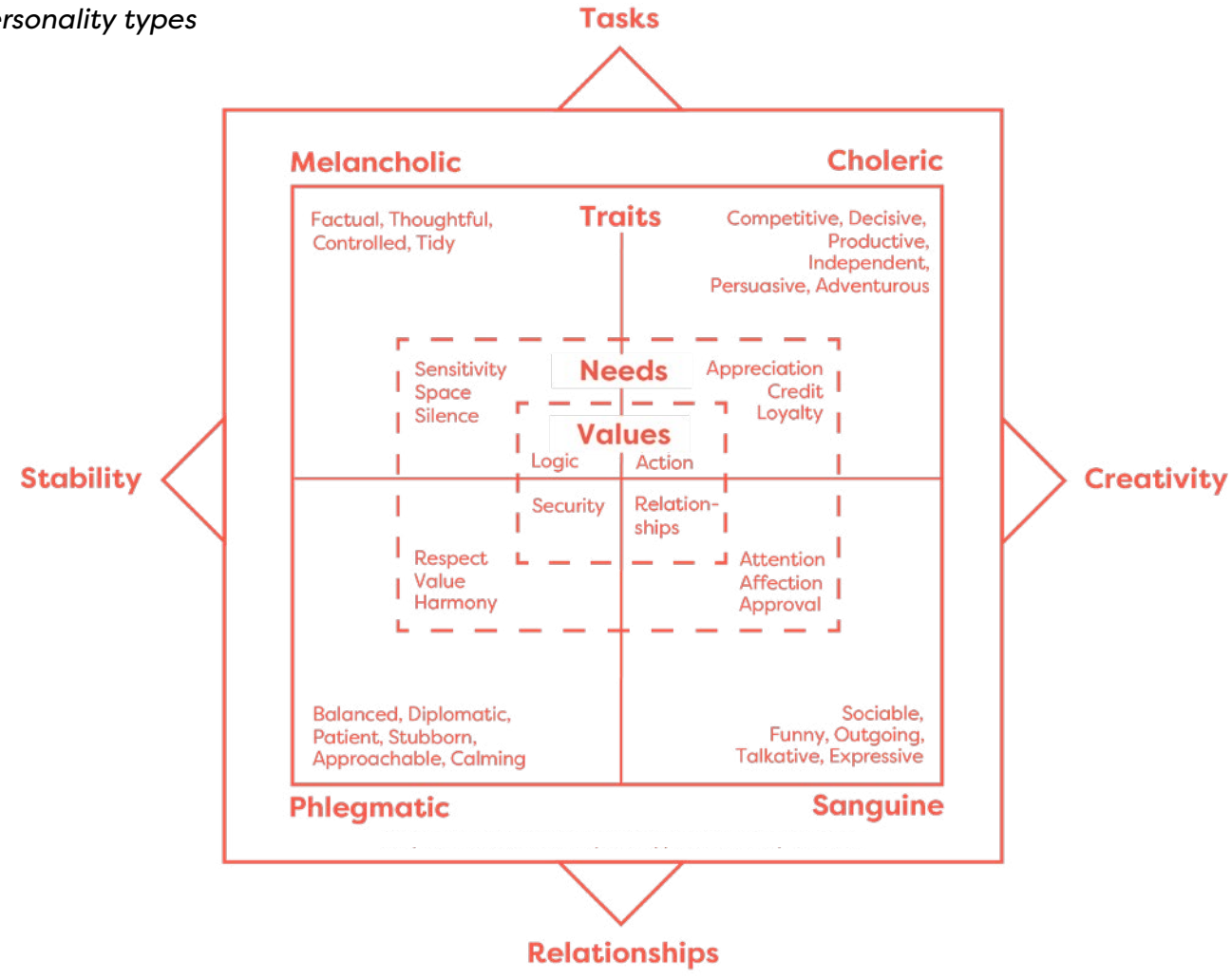
Knowing your personality

There are many psychological models that help us understand ourselves.[51] The two main approaches are personality traits and personality types. Each has their place.

Personality types. Personality types were first discussed by Hippocrates, the father of medicine, over 2,000 years ago. One of their limitations is that they can oversimplify and 'typecast' people, such as one of the four types (Melancholic, Choleric, Phlegmatic or Sanguine) shown in Figure 6. But they can also be useful as a shortcut to reading ourselves and others. Just as we can walk into a paddock and name the types of animals or plants in it, what their characteristics are, and what they need if they are to thrive, we need to be able to do the same with people—that is our craft as leaders, and it starts with identifying ourselves.

Photo credit: Andy King

Figure 6:
Personality types

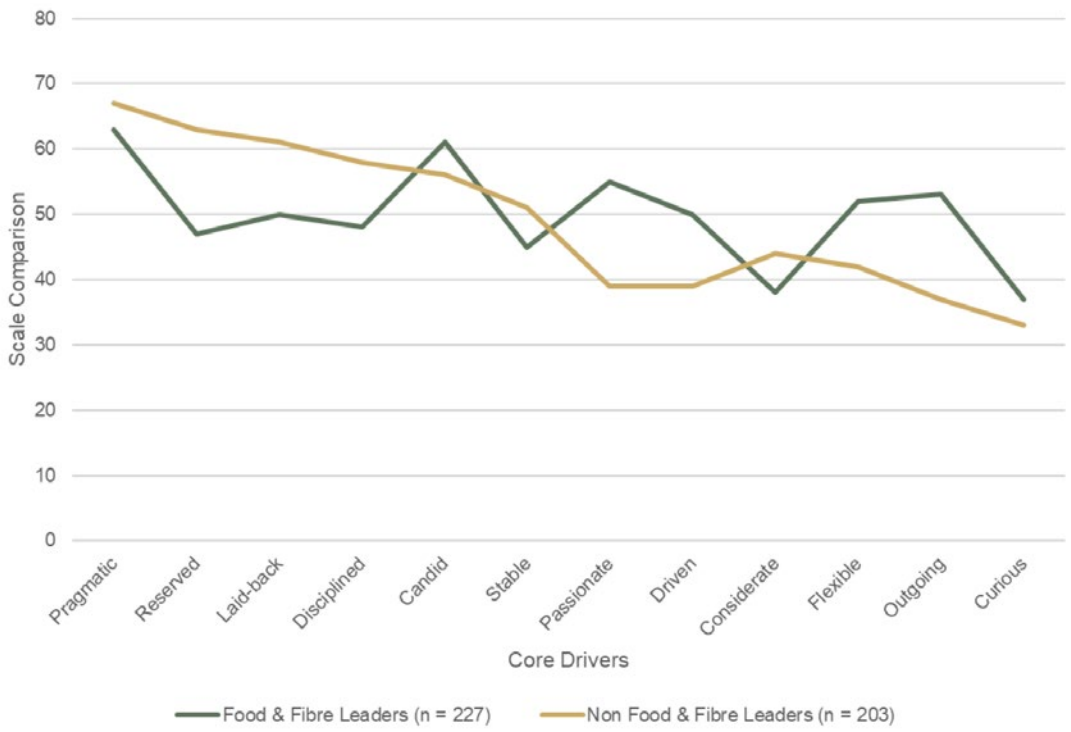


(Adapted from Allison Mooney and Hippocrates' 4 temperaments)

Personality traits. Personality trait assessment tools are often used by psychologists, as these reflect the uniqueness of each person. For instance, respondents to the CliftonStrengths assessment answer 177 paired statements, which produces more than 33 million different combinations. We have our individual traits and as a group or team, our personal traits combine with those of others to form one of the facets of our group or team culture. To illustrate this, Figure 7 uses the Core Drivers diagnostic to compare the personality traits of 430 leaders (227 rural leaders with 203 non-Food and Fibre leaders). This shines a mirror on us as a sector. We are more driven, flexible, outgoing, passionate, candid, and slightly more curious than the average New Zealander. Conversely, because we are more candid, we are also a little less considerate and more likely to tell others what we think of them and their ideas. Knowing this about ourselves can help us connect with others and see things from other perspectives as well as help us moderate our own behaviours.

Figure 7:

The Core Drivers diagnostic: Non Food and Fibre participants compared to leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand's Food and Fibre Sector.



Thinking styles. An overlapping concept with personality traits is the concept of thinking styles. Again, we are all different, but understanding how we think is powerful for understanding how we see the world and solve problems, and how we communicate with others. Some of us like to work with concrete ideas, whereas others may thrive on abstract concepts. Some like to get as much information as possible before starting, while others like to leap in and play it by ear. Again, everyone is different; bringing these differences together and getting the best out of them is what makes teamwork so powerful.

Figure 8:
Gregorc's Thinking Styles[52]

Style	Characteristics	Preferences
Concrete sequential	Methodical, attentive, reliable	Concrete information, "hands-on" experiences, structured learning (instruction)
Abstract sequential	Analytical, logical, serious	Concepts and theory, critical analysis, collaborative learning (research projects)
Abstract random	Perceptive, idealistic, communal	Busy environment, social interaction, unstructured learning (group discussions)
Concrete random	Autonomous, inquisitive, pragmatic	Problem solving, experiments, independent learning (simulations)

Knowing your emotions

In a hangover from the 'stiff upper lip' era of Victorian Britain, Western society teaches us to suppress, control, and even distrust emotions. Yet we cannot lead people with logic alone.

"If you want to change the world you have to change people's hearts."[53] We lead people when we move them emotionally. So as leaders, we need to understand how emotions work, how they impact our thinking, affect our physical bodies, and how they spread between people.

In a sense, emotions are our sentries. They operate at a sub-conscious level, scanning the environment, alerting our bodies, and cueing our 'reasoning brain', or prefrontal cortex, to things its higher order functioning takes longer to pick up on and consider. Emotions are controlled by the limbic system deep in our brain, which is connected to our hormones and our nervous system. Our nervous system has two pathways, one (the parasympathetic system) carries signals that relax us, the other (the sympathetic system) readies us for action. At the deepest level is our amygdala which controls our primal responses to perceived threats: we fight, flight, freeze, or befriend. One of the main nerves our emotions connect to is the vagus nerve, which carries signals between our brain and our digestive system. Emotions literally cause physical responses. A useful reference on this topic is, Brené Brown's book *Atlas of the Heart,* which explores 87 emotions and experiences that define what it means to be human.

When we recognise our feelings, the meaning beneath our emotions, and harmonise them with our ability to reason, we can tap into intuition or our 'gut feelings'. Experienced leaders often use their intuition to speed up their decision-making. When faced with difficult decisions, a powerful leadership question is—what does your gut tell you? This question cuts through the clutter and can get us to what is true. More on this in Chapter 13, which outlines the third element of the principles-centred leadership model.

Leaders we've spoken to often note that understanding their emotions has been invaluable on their leadership journey. One example came from a farming leader, who said that for a long time his style was very directive: emotions of anger would quickly get high, and they'd often take him places that he'd rather not have gone. His 'wake-up' came some years ago when he found himself being aggressive with a team member over a disagreement, which had also been the way he had received discipline from his former supervisors. He stopped, went for a long drive, parked, and stared at the horizon, asking himself over and over, "What am I doing?" After returning and apologising, he started proactively and quietly working on understanding the source of his anger, and then growing his empathy for others. (He continues to work on this.) He now better understands himself, and as a result, is better able to see and appreciate others' perspectives and isn't as quick to react emotionally with anger and aggression to a question or challenge.

52 For further information on thinking styles, one useful reference is Anthony Gregorc's book The Mind Styles Model: Theory, Principles and Practice (AFG, 2006).
53 Ford, E. (2024), #WorkSchoolHours: A Revolution for Parents, Workplaces and the World, Intelligent Ink Press, p. 197.

Embracing authenticity

Leading is never fully mastered; it is a journey that requires us to show up each day. Embracing authenticity requires us to have the courage to be vulnerable. Vulnerability, at its core, is a willingness to acknowledge our own imperfections, which might include mistakes made, thoughts of self-doubt, or feelings we worry others might think less of us for expressing. When we, as leaders, model that we are imperfect humans too, we give others permission to be imperfect and to be human.

Through professional development courses, one forestry leader had learned a lot about his own leadership approach. It was a confronting experience, as these courses shed a light on the less desirable aspects of his leadership that had become engrained. He realised he was repeating a leadership style popular with a generation earlier. It was causing him to have a negative view of his people. This was affecting his family life too. This leader owned his fears, showing humility and bravery in front of his leadership peers and acknowledged that he wanted to change. His peers supported him, as did the people in his team. He started by sharing some of the experiences where he'd mucked up, and that he wanted his peers and team to be a part of his journey towards being a better leader. The people around him were far more open to him after that. And the feedback from them showed how much more he was respected and admired because of his vulnerability and humility. The result was a newfound level of trust and commitment from those around him, since they all understood they were on the same journey together.

When people feel like they are valued, even with their human imperfections, the foundation is set for a sense of belonging (discussed further in Principle 3). This is one of the many paradoxes of leading: showing vulnerability shows strength. As a leader, when we are authentic, a magic thing happens—people trust us more.

Authenticity is not an excuse for poor behaviour, nor is it an excuse for being blind to the possibilities of self-improvement. In fact, we all grow and develop, and what felt authentic to us at one point in our lives, based on our experiences, knowledge, and abilities, will most likely change in time, and an evolved version of ourselves becomes more authentic to us. As one leader noted, "If your old peer group aren't challenged by some of your new stances and beliefs, then you haven't grown."

People are often hired for their hard technical skills and let go for their behaviours or soft skills.[54] We started this chapter with the importance of knowing ourselves and learning how and why our reactions and strengths emerge. The most effective leaders understand and regulate their behaviour without pretending to be someone else. The more authentic we are, the greater the chance we will genuinely connect with others. But poor behaviour or a fake personality pushes people away and undermines their trust. In this case, we might be able to manage others using positional power, but we will not be able to lead them well.

Showing vulnerability shows strength.

54 Hamilton, D., (2019), 'Curiosity and Agility: The Key Predictors of Success', Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2019/06/13/curiosity-and-agility-the-key-predictors-of-success/

The value of curiosity

A common trait amongst all good leaders is curiosity. Curiosity is a hunger to learn and grow further. This is why it belongs at the heart of knowing and growing ourselves as a leader. The best leaders are not just curious about those things that directly relate to them, but they are also curious about what is happening beyond their immediate environment and how they might be able to adapt ideas from elsewhere. As leaders, we need to be curious and tuned in to the political and economic forces that affect the business and social environments within which we operate. These forces include market signals, trading patterns, risks, opportunities, and the awareness of national and international commentators' biases and blind spots.

The good news is that curiosity, and a leaders' support for it, significantly improves team performance and is correlated to the growth and prosperity of their organisation. According to research by the University of Sydney on 3000 international workers across 16 industries, there are three main reasons this happens: curiosity helps leaders make better decisions; it improves leaders' adaptability; and followers have a higher respect for curious leaders.[55]

Curiosity enables leaders to break free from conventional moulds, explore new horizons, and uncover better ways of working at all levels of an organisation. By nurturing our innate sense of curiosity, we can empower our teams to think creatively, adapt to change, and approach problems with an open mind. This willingness to learn and explore is what sets apart leaders who inspire and drive growth from those who merely manage.

Developing resilience

As we learn more about ourselves, and as we grow, we also need to develop resilience to shoulder the risks and consequences of failure that we will undoubtedly experience during our leadership journey. The good news is it is a learnable skill. For example, leaders can practice focusing on what they can control, taking charge of their thoughts, and adopting helpful habits (e.g. keeping fit and connected with others) while avoiding harmful habits (e.g. substance abuse and isolation).

As a concept, resilience refers to the ability to endure and absorb the shocks of the world and recover from adversity. Setbacks can come from all sides, but good health, safety, finances, networks, and psychological safety help build resilience and help us handle misfortune, loss, and the buffeting winds of life. Further, having a clear purpose (discussed further in Principle 3.3) deepens and widens resilience.

Photo credit: Andy King

During the research, we heard from one Director who shared that she expected her senior leadership team to be enthusiastic readers, given that engaging with new material fosters learning and the development of new ideas. "I don't care what you're reading," she'd say to them. "I just want to know that you're reading."

One sheep and beef farmer suffered a life-threatening brain injury. The prognosis for this husband, dad and son was grim, and his family were told to say their goodbyes—or be prepared for the farmer to spend the rest of his life in an institution.

Defying all odds, he survived. In the following years, he had many major surgeries and spent considerable time in hospitals. To help other farmers deal with adversity, he's since gone on to research resilience and has developed a simple resilience-focused model based on three strategies: finding purpose to keep on track, keeping connected with others, and keeping well.[56]

A motivated individual in the sector had the opportunity to undertake a highly demanding professional development programme. Before it was complete, he was removed from this difficult programme and was returned to his previous role because he wasn't meeting the standards required. When this leader recounted it, it was clear that at the time he'd felt embarrassed and a failure. But that set-back also provided motivation for his return: he used the time available to further develop his skills and work on his shortfalls so that he would nail the next programme. And he did, later going on to lead that organisation—he now shares the story of his failure with the newer members, so they know the growth that is possible through resilience.

55 Bickett, D., Schweitzer, J., Mastio, E., (July 2019), Curiosity in leadership: A strategic paradox, Conference Paper, p.4. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338765840_Curiosity_in_leadership_A_strategic_paradox/
56 Cocks, J., (2021), 'How Resilient Farmers Thrive in the Face of Adversity', NZ Rural Leaders, p. 25. https://ruralleaders.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Cocks-Jack_How-resilient-farmers-thrive-in-the-face-of-adversity_K43-2.pdf

Doing the work

It takes work to understand our personalities, know our emotions, dare to be authentic and be constantly curious to learn more. Further, as leaders, we also need to understand our reputation. Asking for 360-degree feedback can be very useful here (and potentially very confronting). How do other people see us? And does this reflect who we believe we are? As one leader noted, "Digging deep and unpacking who we are is not for the faint-hearted, but I tell you what, it's been the key to helping me to really level up—so worth it." The process of understanding ourselves can be sped up with a willing and trusted-friend or a coach who can 'shine a mirror', in a non-judgemental way.

A senior leader in the dairy sector had grown in skills and responsibility, with a belief that there was only one kind of leadership style: assertive, making hard calls, acting ruthlessly, and focusing solely on results above wellbeing.

Wanting to get more results from her team, she took the opportunity to get some personal and professional development, attending courses external to her workplace, participating in internal training, and receiving some personal coaching. She also read several books on leadership and knowing oneself.

As the training went on, she began to realise something about her leadership style. Her cutthroat approach had come about after some big life setbacks that had brought out her fighting spirit. It had served her well, but now it was limiting her progress. Her boss at the time saw something great in her, beyond what she believed about herself. With his encouragement and alternative, yet highly effective, leadership approach, she realised that "there was another way" to lead.

In addition, she'd read a novel with a character in it that she described as "a bit of a b*tch." Part way through the novel, the character lost her job due to her personality. The leader had a moment of stark realisation, seeing herself in that character. She realised she no longer wanted to be known that way, as she didn't feel it reflected who she truly was deep down.

This leader also reflected on a development activity with another woman. "I'd only seen successful women who acted like men. Yet she was successful and acted like a woman, like herself." What the leader realised was that her authentic personality was far softer than she'd put on; to borrow from vulnerability expert Brené Brown, our leader had become used to putting on her armour every day, ready for a fight. A year and a half of professional and personal development showed her that she didn't have to be at war.

This farming leader demonstrated the importance of knowing yourself. She believed that she had understood her motivations and thinking style, but honest reflection informed by her training helped her test her assumptions and start assessing where further personal growth could take her. The reflective process enabled her to get to the root of her emotional responses, helping her regulate and respond better. This also had a better effect on her reputation, eventually bringing it more in line with her true values and identity, and not what she thought was expected of her. Instead of being fired, she has been offered a significantly larger role.

PRINCIPLE 1.2—KNOW OTHERS

As leaders, in addition to knowing ourselves we need to know others. To know others, we must seek to understand them. The good news is that the things we seek to learn about ourselves (personality, thinking style, emotions, and resilience) are the same things we need to be curious about in seeking to know others. Of course, we can never hope to know another person as well as we know ourselves, or as well as they know themselves.

As poet Walt Whitman said, "Be curious, not judgemental."

How do we understand others?

To learn and understand others, we must demonstrate empathy. This is the ability to see and understand someone else's perspective without judging it, or them. Despite running counter to some of the work cultures within the sector (where empathy is often seen as soft and suppressing feelings is seen as strength), empathy is highly useful for understanding another person. Demonstrating a genuine care and empathy for the team was frequently cited as a core attribute of what kaimahi (workers) in the sector wanted from their leaders. Care and empathy are not just about the workplace; the best leaders care about their people as whole humans, which includes caring about their mental health and what's going on for them at home.

A manager in a farm services support organisation, could see that one of his team wasn't his best. He often came to work late and was making basic mistakes with service repairs. The manager told us "I had the misfortune to work for a boss some years ago who would publicly rip into underperforming team members." Not wishing to replicate this style, he talked to his young team member and learnt he was stressed by difficulties at home. While the manager couldn't fix the problem, he connected his teammate with counselling and social support services. He also lent an empathetic ear when it was needed. This wasn't a large time commitment for this manager, but it had a big impact—the team member's head was clear, and his performance improved.

As leaders, we must never underestimate the value of asking our people questions such as:

- "What are your preferences here?"
- "What do you most value in this instance?"
- "What gets you excited to participate in this activity?"
- "What is your thinking style?"
- "How does this make you feel?"
- "What do you consider to be good-natured banter here?"
- "How do you like to receive feedback?"
- "What are your ambitions?"
- "What are some of your interests outside of work?"
- "How are your stress levels at the moment?"
- "How's your family?"

A farm manager shared a story regarding one of his team who had emigrated from Sri Lanka, and whose performance had dipped. Rather than wringing out this team member in front of everyone, the farm manager dug deeper: the worker was having issues understanding the requirements of immigration officials and was struggling to bring his family over. The farm manager helped him with his application, including providing the required proof of employment. But he didn't stop there. Once the family arrived, the manager helped integrate the family into the local community, connecting them to the local school, showing them how to register with the GP, and how to open a New Zealand bank account.

Different personalities

Every leader knows (or soon learns) that not all people have the same personality types, traits and thinking styles as themselves, or as each other. As shown in Figure 6, some people value security, others value action, and equally, some people strongly value relationships, while others place more value on logic. As Figure 7 showed, we have different core drivers. Some people are more reserved, and others are outgoing, some may be laid-back, and others more passionate. People also have different thinking styles (Figure 8): some people prefer concrete information and others prefer unstructured learning and busy environments. The point is, as leaders, we need to consider our team members' individual personalities and adapt the way we connect with and motivate each person to suit that person and the circumstances.

Using the models in the previous section (Principle 1.1 – Know self) can be a useful guide during these conversations. We can't expect our team members to be ready to dive in with answers immediately—some of these concepts may not be instantly familiar, and it may take time to build up their trust and our understanding. But we can encourage them to develop deeper understanding of themselves, including offering them the chance to take personality assessments, receive coaching or just by being vulnerable ourselves—making it safe for courageous conversations.

Different emotional drivers

It is also important to understand how people are feeling emotionally, and what impact this may be having on their behaviours or performance at work.

If the purpose of leadership is to create an environment where people thrive, then being able to identify behaviours and sources of those behaviours gives us the ability to create an even better environment.

We also need to know our people, and encourage them to be their whole, fully authentic self, not just their 'work-self'. As leaders we should take an interest in what is happening in our teammates' lives and what is important to them outside of work, while being careful not to overstep privacy barriers.

Differences around appropriateness

Another consideration is around language, tone, imagery, banter, and jokes. When this is healthy, it can be great for morale and can create a sense of fun and laughter. But any strength taken too far becomes a weakness. Good leaders uphold culture—they guide the language, tone of conversation, and banter to ensure it doesn't become toxic. One older farmer told us of a rule of thumb that he lived by: "jokes are only funny if everyone finds them funny, including the subject of the joke."

Different preferences around feedback

Another way people vary is when it comes to recognition. We all want to be seen, but we all like to be recognised or appreciated in different ways. One person might find it very uncomfortable to be acknowledged in front of the team, whereas another would relish it. One of the skills of seeing and understanding others is to learn how they best respond to praise and how they receive critique. As a rule of thumb however, leaders should generally 'praise in public and critique privately'.

One emerging leader shared a story about a person in an accounts team using passive-aggressive and snarky comments towards other members of their team; they were also prone to becoming heated quickly. When the leader sought to understand the unmet need that was driving this poor behaviour, he realised that the accounts person was constantly being talked over and was not being valued or appreciated for the important role she contributed to the farming team. She was often being made to feel that she was 'less than' the 'real' farm workers. Once this need was understood and then addressed, the poor behaviour disappeared, and the office culture improved.

Another leader talked about how taking the micky out of each other, light-hearted pranks, and the sharing of jokes was great for building a positive culture at work. "Some people complain that 'you can't have a laugh anymore, because political correctness has gone mad'. But my response to this is that it takes a very unintelligent person to only be able to joke by making someone else feel belittled, devalued, excluded, or offended. My team and I absolutely take the micky out of each other and share dark jokes, but these are shared because we really understand each other, and we know what we all find ok. If one person isn't having fun, then it's not fun, full stop."

Rewards mean different things to different people. It's important to understand what will be of value to each individual. For some, a reward could be extra professional development opportunities. But as one leader reported, over-encouragement to attend further training could be felt as bullying to someone who didn't welcome the offer of development. It's all about getting to know our people and understanding what they value and what they need.

Different skills and talents

As leaders, we need to know our peoples' skills, talents, and ambitions. And further, when we see people's talent, we should tell them. One of the greatest gifts a leader can give is encouragement and belief. This simple act can have an exponential effect on those who are wayfinding in their leadership journey. It can literally change destinies.

Many of those talked to during our research mentioned leaders who had acknowledged their potential or provided words of encouragement that proved instrumental in propelling their career or life choices. This included several women across different industries, who reported they'd not seen themselves as potential leaders in male-dominated industries until they were shoulder-tapped with a word of encouragement by existing leaders.

Self-doubt and the power of encouragement is not just restricted to women; it is universal.

These five examples of differences (personalities, emotional drivers, appropriateness, feedback preference and skills and talents) are not an exhaustive list, but they provide a sample of things to consider. If we are to motivate people to achieve the required tasks, it's essential we seek to know and understand them. The next section (Principle 1.3 – Build relationships) explores this further.

During research we heard a story of a young, talented individual who felt neglected by their manager because of a flat rewards structure. In group settings, the well-meaning manager wanted to recognise everyone for their contributions, so praised all team members equally. The organisation ended up losing that young individual, because they felt they weren't getting the recognition they deserved; people doing less work were getting the same amount of praise. As well as this seeming unfair, it also caused them to question their performance. "Perhaps I wasn't doing as well as I thought, because the boss kept telling the rest of the team they were doing just as great."

It's part of the leader's craft to recognise and draw out the best from each person. In this case, the leader missed an opportunity. While encouraging the whole team is very important, the manager was accidentally promoting mediocrity and disengagement. As a rule, praise is most effective when it is warranted and specific.

One leader shared a story that exemplified the differences here. She had been selected for a tough professional development programme and was thrilled to tell her husband about it. His response: "Oh hun, that sucks; I'm sorry your boss keeps giving you extra work. I wish he could see that you are a great leader and don't need the extra training." She laughed: "My boss *does* see that—*that's* why he is investing in me, and I'm stoked!"

A young Māori horticulturalist was appointed into a leadership role. Prior to this, he hadn't thought of himself as a leader. He spoke of how humility had been drummed into him; his idea of a stereotypical leader didn't align with his idea of himself. However, his mentor—also in the organisation—pushed and encouraged him, knowing and understanding that he'd benefit from the challenge and growth. As the young leader described it, "She saw something in me that I didn't."

In the end, he mustered the courage and applied for the role. Now he is a valued leader in the organisation, and he remains incredibly grateful that she saw him, persevered, and provided the encouragement that let him see himself as others did.

A senior leader spoke about the importance of *panning for gold.* She herself was shoulder-tapped by someone who believed in her. That act of encouragement inspired her to pursue further training and development and to ultimately achieve her position, which has allowed her to positively impact the lives of many other women.

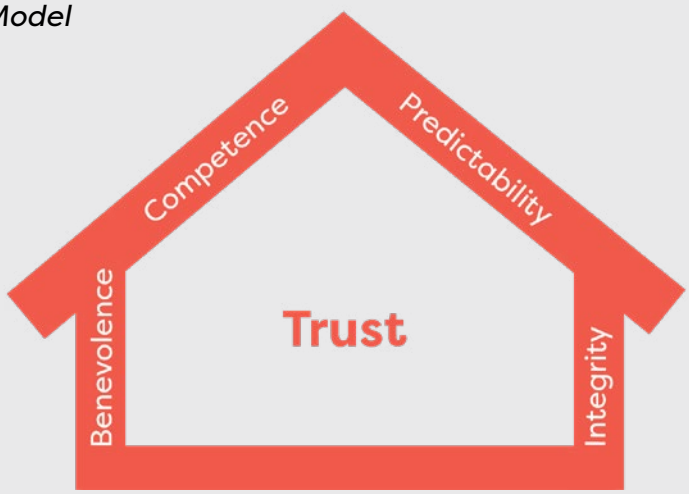
As leaders, once we know ourselves, and know others, we then need to build bridges of connection that develop, deepen, and enhance relationships. It is important to note that in practice, this happens simultaneously and iteratively. We cannot wait to fully understand ourselves (a life's journey), and fully understand others (an iterative process) before building relationships.

Building trust

Relationships are founded on trust. It is also the oxygen that leadership breathes. How leaders behave builds or destroys trust. Without trust, suspicion, misunderstandings, failing relationships, and toxic workplaces quickly follow. In his bestselling book *5 Dysfunctions of a Team,* Patrick Lencioni identifies the lack of trust as ground zero for all other dysfunctions within a team. To trust someone, is to "make oneself vulnerable to another person ... based on the expectation that [they] will perform a particular action important to [you], irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other [person]."[57]

The Canadian Armed Forces conducted deep research into the topic and have created a simple trust model that is now used around the world. Figure 9 is an adaptation of the Canadian model's core components.

Figure 9:
Trust Model



Leadership is not just about relationships. It is all about relationships.
Maria Ngātai

• **Benevolence.** *I trust that you care.* Benevolence is believing that another's actions are motivated by genuine care and concern. The team need to believe the leader has their back and their interests at heart. As one leader told us, "It's just nice knowing that someone is looking for you in the dark."

• **Competence.** *I trust you can do it right.* Competence is believing another person has the skills, knowledge, and judgement to accomplish a task. Competence is important because the team look to the leader for inspiration and guidance.

In the information age, there has been an explosion of human knowledge. As a result, it is no longer the leader with the brightest brain and the most followers who wins, but the leader who can unleash the most hearts and minds.

• **Predictability.** *I trust you'll stick it out.* Predictability is believing that another's reactions and behaviours can be reliably anticipated. Predictability is vital for creating psychological safety in a team. By contrast, inconsistency erodes trust, because it signals to people that they cannot rely on how a leader is going to act or react.

• **Integrity.** *I trust you'll do the right thing.* Integrity is believing in another's honesty, motivation, ethos, and values.

Leaders that build trust with their people, through benevolence, competence, predictability, and integrity, build strong relationships.

57 **Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995.** As cited in Defense R&D Canada, (September 2009), The Trust in Teams and Trust in Leaders Scale: A Review of Their Psychometric Properties and Item Selection, p. 1. **https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA534178.pdf**

Getting alongside

Many stories emerged about the importance of leaders getting alongside their people to build relationships. In some examples the leader went the extra mile to help their team during a crisis, or showed benevolence when things went wrong, instead of criticising. Doing so, helps to build a sense of team unity and camaraderie. 'Camaraderie is a feeling of trust and friendship among a group of people who have usually ... gone through some kind of experience together.'[58] According to Gallup research, enterprises with good camaraderie are more profitable, have lower accident rates, lower staff turnover and in service industries, their customers have a better experience.[59]

One young farm cadet recounted a story of lambs 'blowing back'. Having just come off their mothers, the lambs were scatter-brained, and a little too much pressure meant they ran the wrong way during a muster. The cadet pointed out that it would have been easy for the boss to yell at the dogs or blame one of the cadets. Instead, he remained calm and worked alongside the cadets, dealing with the facts of the situation to resolve the issue. "He didn't blame us. We were feeling sh*t about it anyway," the cadet explained. "Good leadership is when the boss works alongside you and thinks you're a good bugger." Another cadet similarly added, "When we're sowing maize, I love it when the boss ploughs the fields too."

In stories from the fishing sector, one person spoke about working Christmas Eve in a hectic fish shop, and the sense of trust and respect that grew when he saw the CEO of the company bagging ice and serving customers. Another recounted seeing the boss working on the floor of a fish processing plant, helping the team through an especially busy time.

One young farming leader spoke about the respect he felt for his senior strategic leader (who was not from a farming background) when she showed up to milk the cows alongside the team. "I'll never forget it. Sure, we all had a laugh with her when she stood in the wrong place and literally got sh*t on her face, and she made plenty of errors fumbling while putting on the cups. She could have easily got embarrassed and backed out, but she persevered with humility and humour. Despite her senior rank, she respected us as the experts and followed our lead. No, we are not thinking she would be a great asset as a farm hand. But I tell you what, her showing up that day spoke volumes about her genuine desire to connect with us all, on our turf. Respect."

Leading by example has a long-standing impact. These stories occurred years ago, but they were vividly retold as though they had only happened yesterday. In the end, 'leading' is a verb—an act. Our teammates hear our words, but they believe our actions. If we as leaders show up at key moments and demonstrate that we're not above the tough stuff or above their team, we'll create more trust and loyalty than we could ever generate with the most inspiring speech or glossy strategy. Real leadership happens more often in the small human moments than in grand gestures.

In many cases, the appointed leader may not have come 'through the ranks'. (There can be very good reasons for this: being the most technically competent does not guarantee the ability to be the best people leader. Technical competence and leadership ability are different skillsets.) This may mean that we, as the leader, are not proficient at the task our team members are conducting. However, this doesn't provide an exemption from getting alongside and showing up. And in fact, doing so, despite a knowledge gap, can greatly enhance relationships.

58 Camaraderie. (2023, November 4). In Collins English Dictionary
59 Wagner, R., Harter, J., (February 2008), The Tenth Element of Great Managing Executives Who Think Friendships Are None of Their Business Don't Understand Human Nature, Gallup Business Journal.
https://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/104197/tenth-element-great-managing.aspx

Connecting, not just communicating

How we communicate as leaders has a big impact on our ability to connect and build relationships. So, it makes sense that communication is often touted as a critical leadership capability.

Communication enables leaders to inspire and mobilise others. Teams share understanding and build trusted relationships through communication. Equally, miscommunications are one of the greatest causes of team friction. NZ Rural Leaders research data on 156 leaders in the sector shows that Food and Fibre leaders, as a demographic, have a tendency towards being candid. According to the psychology firm, Deeper Signals, a strength of candid individuals is that they "tend to be direct and to the point when dealing with others. They prefer to not beat around the bush .... The limitations of being candid are [the tendency to] come across as uncaring and too blunt..."[60]

Sometimes, getting straight to the point is exactly what is required, but other times, diplomacy and delicacy can be far more effective. If leaders are to truly connect, not only do we need to consider the content, tone and medium of delivery that is most appropriate for what we are trying to achieve, but we also need to show empathy for those we are trying to connect with to achieve it. As was outlined in the previous section, Principle 1.2 – Know others, everyone is different, which means people respond better if their hopes and needs are considered.

If the sector is to excel at building and maintaining collegial relationships and productive organisations, then how we connect is a crucial area of focus. As well as being important for cohesion within the sector, this is even more important when dealing with people outside the sector who have different cultural settings, for instance, whose cultures value courtesy and 'saving face'.

60 **Deeper Signals, (2023, January 04),** Understanding Core Drivers. **https://www.deepersignals.com/core-driver-faqs**

Connecting, not just communicating —practical examples

In addition to building trust, getting alongside, and communicating effectively, here are a few further practical examples and ideas from people in the sector, for building relationships with their team:

• **Having scheduled one-on-one meetings** with each of the team members to ask them more about their thoughts, feelings, aspirations, challenges, wins, and more.

• **Organising social events** that include the teams' family members. "It's amazing how much deeper you can connect with your team when you have spent time with their family (or even their parents, particularly if they are a young team member), and even better if they connect with your family too."

• **Going for a 'walk and talk'.** "We cover the same stuff we would in a 'sit-down meeting', but the physical act of walking while talking, and being side by side (rather than eye to eye), tends to open-up a different type of dialog, and is a different way to connect."

• **Asking about their interests** and organising an activity around that. "Maybe it's a team day going to a sports match, or entering a pub quiz as a team, doing theatre sports, or the classics such as ten pin bowling, go karts and paintball. These can be another way to connect, where, as the leader, I am very much an equal with my team".

• **Participating in professional development** activities (courses, seminars, workshops, off-site activities) alongside the team. "It really helped us to deepen our connections, not just between the team and I, but also between the team members."

• **Routine AMA (ask me anything) sessions.** "It took a little bit for my team to warm up and get comfortable to ask me what was really on their mind, but I persisted, and it was worth it – they really opened-up and gave me the opportunity to open up too. A word of warning: if you run an AMA session, you really must be prepared to answer anything or, come back to them if you don't know the answer in that moment—which is totally fine."

• **Organising a brainstorming session** with the team to work through a specific challenge, one that is relevant to the team, but perhaps not routine. This gets people thinking creatively and gives a different setting and 'mood' to connect.

• **Being vulnerable.** Share a personal story—maybe a struggle, maybe a failure, maybe something you have been working on yourself. Being vulnerable yourself often endears people to reciprocate, which is another way to connect.

• **Share a short article** or a YouTube clip that covers a topic of interest and ask the team to watch/read it. Then as a team, discuss thoughts on it. It could be specific to work, or it could be something a bit broader, maybe even philosophical. And then give each team member the chance to suggest the article/clip and do this every month, for example.

• **Charity work.** Perhaps fundraising during Movember, or for Pink Ribbon, or volunteering together for a community project. Charities that are local and relevant to your people often result in more involvement.

• **Competitions.** This could be non-work related, doing health-related challenges as a team, or something specific to your place of work. Get the team to run these.

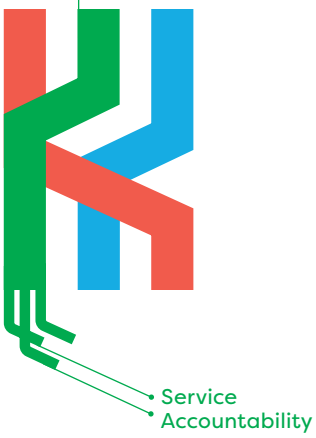
CHAPTER 10—PRINCIPLE TWO: SERVICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

At the heart of great leadership in the sector is an ethos of service and accountability. This is because leadership comes with a duty of care to those being led. It guards the leader and those they lead from the dark side of leadership (see Chapter 4: Why does leadership matter). This strand of the helix, 'service and accountability', is discussed as two sub-strands, or sub-principles:

2.1 – Service: Being entrusted with leadership is a privilege, never a right.

2.2 – Accountability: As a leader, "it is not about you, but it is on you."

Figure 10: *Principle 2: Service and Accountability*



PRINCIPLE 2.1—SERVICE

Serving something greater

The satisfaction of serving something bigger than ourselves brings its own reward. Leaders in the sector often speak about duties beyond yields or shareholder returns. For some, that means continuing a family legacy, or honouring the earth or sea. In a Te Ao Māori context, people are deeply connected to the land through whakapapa. Many who steward multi-generational farms and orchards feel a similar relationship to their land. This section focuses on the importance of serving something beyond us.

Truly leading well is an act of service. The ethos of service is based in the idea that we, as leaders, are responsible to the collective, a concept that doesn't easily align with the individualism of modern culture. In Niue, the village concept of Fakafekauaga (Servantship) is a way of living that is deeply rooted in collective ideals.[61]

Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori leadership approaches emphasise holistic care of the whanau, hapu (sub-tribe), iwi and Te Taiao. In all these approaches, our role as the leader, is to serve the collective, not ourselves. If we look hard, we find that the ethos of service is a hallmark of great leaders the world over. But there will also be leaders in each of our lives who, through an ethos of service, influenced our paths. Maybe it was a teacher, or a boss, or a parental figure—someone who led by example and wisdom.

An ethos of service works by unlocking one of leadership's paradoxes (to lead we must serve). Leaders who serve, harness the reciprocal energy of the collective group or team. To be clear, service does not mean we, as the leader, are in servitude to our teammates.[62] Rather, it means we keep individuals, the team, and the overarching purpose of the team at heart and in a dynamic balance.

Consider the story of a civil servant who made policies for the betterment of the sector.

This leader had a long career working with policy and the government. As opposed to pursuing generalist progression in ever higher leadership ranks, his leadership progression pathway towards making a strategic level impact was as a specialist. (See the model at Figure 17, Chapter 14). Over a long and illustrious career in the public service, that touched thousands, his leadership journey culminated as a deep expert. He never sought accolades, and was completely ego-free, he frequently supported people when he didn't have to. He was an extraordinary talent, eccentric at times, but an absolute servant to the sector. He was uniquely and genuinely apolitical, and his encyclopaedic knowledge of parliamentary process was called upon by politicians of all stripes. His purpose was to serve the New Zealand people in the way he could.

Adopting an ethos of service, also helps Food and Fibre leaders avoid a common leadership trap—pride.

If serving is below you, then leadership is beyond you.
Bishop Dale Bronner

61 **Makapatama, G., (n.d.), Introducing Fakafekauaga (Servantship),** The Southern Initiative. https://www.tsi.nz/tsi-updates-feed/introducing-fakafekaugaa-servantship

62 **We are not arguing for the wholesale adoption of Greenleaf's (1998)** servant leadership theory, in which he argued that leaders should prioritise the interests of followers over themselves and focus on the consultative decision-making. We think each of those things has value, but they do not surpass the need to achieve the team's mission or purpose, we accept that sometimes decisions need to be taken on behalf of the team, rather than in consultation with them and we also argue that leaders must also look after themselves, such that they remain effective. In the context of Food and Fibre leadership, the concept of service is an ethos.

Dealing with status and power

Leadership roles typically come with status and power which, to the unprepared, can be intoxicating. Leaders who put their own interests first, or who start thinking their elevated position equates to importance, set a rot in action that will ultimately undermine themselves and the results they seek to create (even if this takes years). In the worst situations, leaders who serve themselves and lord it over others eventually create toxic environments. So how do we deal with status and power?

• Social status is given by others. It is the extent to which an individual or a group is respected or admired by others.[63] In a Te Ao Māori context status has similarities to mana, which is bestowed on a person by others in reflection of their standing that is both earned and/or inherited.

• Power is similar, but distinct from status. Power can be defined as the unequal control over valued resources in social relations.[64] Generally (but not always) those in leadership positions have more control over high-value resources, including information, and 'followers' have lower power.

Remaining grounded. Remaining grounded is crucial to avoiding the trap of pride that many leaders have fallen into when they accrue status and power. The 'robes of office' mean that people often look to the person placed in leadership for guidance, authority to act and for approval. The temptation can be for us, as the leader, to centralise power and to start believing we are somehow more important than those we lead. The opposite is true, as the leader, we are more accountable, not more important (more on this in Principle 2.2 – Accountability).

Leadership ripple effect. What a leader says and does has a disproportionate impact on others in the team, because we typically have more power and access to more information. Promotion in any team is usually a result of consistently impressing the leader. Therefore, it follows that leaders have the largest influence on the culture of a group or team. Not least because our approach will be copied by our subordinate leaders—*this the leadership ripple effect.* For example, if a leader operates with an autocratic style, this may reduce short-term risks and gain efficiencies, particularly in a crisis, but this will also suppress initiative and growth. Over time this breeds a *permission culture* instead of a *mission culture.*

Therefore, it is important that those in leadership roles understand what power is and its effects.

Social psychologists French and Raven identified several sources of power which fall under two categories: legitimate and personal.[65]

• **Legitimate power** is the authority that comes from a leader's role or position. It is transactional in nature and gets compliance by using *coercion* (punishment or threat of punishment), the power to offer *rewards* such as the promise of a bonus or promotion; or control over *information* which can be used both as a weapon or to help others.

• **Personal power** is given by followers to a leader based on their *expertise,* or their likeability (*referent* power). It tends to be more transformational in nature.

We contend there is something that transcends power. This is further discussed in *Chapter 13 – Element Three: Dimensions.*

Humility

Humility is another one of leadership's paradoxical keys. We are often told that those in leadership need to appear confident and have all the answers. While leaders do need to inspire confidence and create clarity, wise leaders tap into humility. They prefer to search for what, rather than who, is right.

Humility is such a powerful truth that the military's elite Special Air Service (SAS) include it as one of the four tenets that they live by: "Humility is powerful in that it keeps us open to new ideas and prevents us from becoming blind to our own failings."[66] Renowned author Jim Collins highlights the commercial value of humility also. Collins and his team researched 1435 companies who had been in the *Fortune 500* over a number of years, to find out why some companies made the leap from good to great companies and others did not. Of the 11 companies that made the cut to fit his criteria, all of them had what Collins terms 'Level 5' leaders at the point they made the leap—those who "build enduring greatness through a paradoxical combination of personal humility and professional will."[67]

To make the point one more time, Spiller, Barclay-Kerr and Panoho's wayfinding leadership model puts it this way: "To step into true Rangatira (leadership) space is to work with others from a place of deep humility, leading with others to allow all to succeed. This is achieved by leading in a mana-enhancing way and paying attention to relationships, reciprocity, and mutual recognition."[68]

Enhancing Mana

Mana is a deep and collective concept that cannot be comprehensively explored here. As leaders, we need to be conscious that we stand in the mana (inherited and endowed authority) of our group. Since it belongs to the group, it is a group-enhanced quality.[69] How we conduct ourselves and how we treat others can diminish or enhance the mana of all, including us as the leader, our whanau, community, and other organisations we may represent. As Spiller and Stockdale note, "Wise managers and leaders will ... seek to create the conditions whereby mana can grow in others. Accepting where people are, and valuing what they bring, helps ensure mana grows in people."[70] According to Ta (Sir) Mason Durie, contributing to others through acts of generosity produces well-being, and enhances and uplifts the mana of all.[71] Mana-based solutions are win-win outcomes. When it is necessary to correct a team member, this should be done with respect and in a mana-enhancing way. One rule of thumb is to praise in public and correct in private, as mentioned earlier.

63 **Magee, J., Galinsky, A., (2008),** Social Hierarchy: The Self-Reinforcing Nature of Power and Status, Academy of Management Annals, Vol 2 (1), 359. **https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247527824_8_Social_Hierarchy_The_Self-Reinforcing_Nature_of_Power_and_Status**
64 Ibid.
65 **French, J., Raven, B., (1959).** The Bases of Social Power. In Cartwright, D (ed.). Studies in Social Power. University of Michigan. pp. 150–167.
66 **Bojilova, A., (2021),** Taking the road less travelled Exploring the link between curiosity and resilience with 1NZSAS, University of Waikato, pp, 104-105. **https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/14535/thesis.pdf?sequence=4**
67 **Collins, J., (October 2001),** Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't, Random House, p. 20.

Invest in your people

As leaders we grow people, and our people grow the Food and Fibre our nation relies on. When we invest in our people, we invest in our business, not least because our people make decisions every day that have a material impact on the purpose or profit of our organisation. When we invest in our people, they are far more engaged; research by Gallup shows engaged teams have significantly lower staff turnover (18-40 percent).[72] And when it does finally come time for that person to leave, they can do so in a positive way, enhancing the reputation of the organisation in the process.

Photo credit: Mark Coote

One story emerged that illustrated the value of leaders serving their people was a leader who ran an award-winning orchard. She established a vegetable garden on site, so that the team were able to access nutrient-rich food. This approach grew: team members were invited to take seedlings and fertiliser home so they could establish their own gardens for their families. Towards the end of December, they provided meat for generous Christmas meals. On bad weather days, when they couldn't be in the orchards, she ran educational programmes for the team.

The success of this orchard was because she saw the team as whole people, with families and whanau. The orchard didn't have a hierarchical framework filled by human resources, but a team of people with kaimahi (workers) at the centre.

This model didn't come from nothing. Rather it is an example of the leadership ripple effect. When the leader was a young mum, she worked with another organisation. One of her kids was sick, and she was afraid she was at risk of losing her job. But her bosses told her to put her family first and take the time she needed. She took that forward and put people at the centre of her own leadership approach. She even made special efforts to bring mums into the organisation, employing them for school hours and in a way that showed parenting and employment didn't have to be in conflict.

This leader continues to lead in this space and gets exceptional productivity from her orchard because she serves her people and sees them as whole people at the heart of her operation, not resources at the bottom rung of a hierarchy.

Leaders serving leaders

For the sector to have a thriving leadership culture, it needs seasoned leaders to accept their special role in encouraging, coaching, and mentoring less experienced leaders. In an age of mass and social media, some in the sector have commented that leadership is not worth the grief, especially when leaders are unfairly attacked.

Left unchecked, unfair attacks on leaders reduces the willingness of others to step into leadership roles for fear of the personal cost to them and their families.

The gift of encouragement and belief from other leaders can have an out-sized impact on those finding the way in their leadership journey. It can help them build resilience. It can also encourage those from under-represented segments of the sector and society to put themselves forward for leadership. When these people step into leadership, it has a ripple effect that helps others see what they could be. The more diversity in the sector's leadership levels, the more creative vigour we can generate. We must serve and support the sector's leadership. Ultimately, their success or failure is shared by us all.

68 **Carlson, L., (2020, May 28),** 'With' leadership in a changing landscape, [Blog], University of Waikato. **https://www.waikato.ac.nz/professionallearning/blog/with-leadership-in-a-changing-landscape**
69 **Spiller, C., & Stockdale, M. (in-press, 2012).** Managing and leading from a Māori perspective: Bringing new life and energy to organizations. In J. Neal (ed), Handbook for faith and spirituality in the workplace, New York: Springer Publishing Company. p, 21.
70 **Spiller, C. et al., p, 19.**
71 **Durie, M. (2001).** Mauri ora: The dynamics of Māori health. Oxford University Press. p. 83.
72 **Harter, et al., (2020),** The Relationship Between Engagement at Work and Organizational Outcomes 2020 Q12® Meta-Analysis: 10th Edition, Gallup, p. 3.

The buck stops with you

Ultimately the buck stops with the leader. As the leader, we are accountable for the results and wellness of our team. A leader's accountability cannot be divided or delegated, but our authority and responsibilities can and should be. This is the dilemma for micromanagers: they understand that accountability rests with them, but they resist letting go of their authority, fearing that mistakes will be made, or standards not met. It takes courage to let go and let others act for us, knowing they may do it differently to us. However, the best leaders find the courage to share power. This is done by delegating authority and responsibilities to the lowest appropriate level. This unlocks another one of leadership's paradoxes: when we share power, it becomes infinite.[73] There is an art to delegation which is discussed below.

Leadership comes with scars

As we heard from one Māori agri-business leader, effective leadership is not a popularity contest. Leadership comes with scars. This is because a leader's calling is to change-up (or adapt) the game rather than optimise the current game. To change with the times, the sector needs leaders with the courage of their convictions. However, when a leader does step out with courage, they should expect to face at least one of three tests:

- When leaders challenge long-held ways of doing things: people will doubt, disagree, or challenge them, potentially in confronting ways.
- By virtue of doing something new, leaders will get things wrong: people will criticise their missteps.
- Even when leaders succeed, some will seek to cut down the 'tall poppies'.

As a result, leadership can be lonely, full of self-doubt and hard work. But the scars of endeavour are the leader's badges of pride. The satisfaction of contributing to something bigger than ourselves is its own reward.

A young leader was promoted to a more senior role, and the new perspective meant she started favouring decisions that, as a junior, she would have disagreed with. Accusations of hypocrisy followed, which the young leader rejected. Instead, it showed that she'd grown and appreciated a different view. This further reinforces the idea that leadership comes with scars—and leaders need the courage to change their minds in the face of new information or make potentially unpopular decisions if motivated by the right causes. On reflection, she also realised that to avoid similar accusations again she had a responsibility to her team to communicate in a way that connected the team's reality with the broader perspective she now had access too.

Photo credit: Dan 'Maxy' Max

Leadership is about accountability, not importance.

73 **Brown, B. (2018).** Dare to lead: Brave work, tough conversations, whole hearts. New York: Random House

Dealing with mistakes

Humans make mistakes. As leaders, we need to differentiate between mistakes caused by experimentation, a genuine misjudgment, a lack of training, and mistakes that are the product of an underlying character issue or unaddressed need that is not being met (for example, stress, health issues, or a lack of self-confidence).

Each type of mistake will have a unique set of causes and require a tailored solution. It can be easy for us to tell-off the wrongdoer. However, we are all learning. It is often better to try and understand what is going on below the surface. In some instances, leaders are best to get professional help for a team member. Where it's a simple performance issue, there are two broad approaches leaders can use: mentoring and coaching.

• **Mentoring** is about providing advice and guidance. Generally, it involves a more experienced person providing insights to a more junior team member. However, reverse mentoring can be used by senior leaders to get insights from more junior team members and to calibrate their leadership approach to the needs of the team and the field environment. (And of course, we can always learn new ideas from those earlier in their journey than us).

• **Coaching** uses questioning and listening to help a team member find their own 'A-ha moments'. If time and circumstance allow, it can be more growth inducing than mentoring, because people come to their own understanding.

Every dairy farm will have a story about ruining a vat of milk. One incident endeared a young worker to his boss immediately. A cow on antibiotics was milked, and the milk wasn't discarded but went into the vat, contaminating the entire contents. It all had to go. The farm manager could have chewed out the young worker, but when the business manager arrived, the farm manager accepted the responsibility. "We've screwed up," he said. "We've lost the milk for today." While everyone was suitably annoyed, the farm manager didn't blame the young worker to the business manager. The young worker learned his lesson well and never forgot the act of loyalty by his leader.

The farm manager had created an environment of psychological safety, showing that while mistakes weren't encouraged, it was possible to make mistakes without fear of losing a job. The result of this behaviour is that psychologically safe teams tend to lean in more, supporting a team dynamic that's prepared to ask questions before making errors.

Another example was a leader in the fishing industry. She talked about making an error, which cost the company a lot of money. She had only recently started working there and was scared she would be fired. She braced herself to be rebuked by her the boss and was surprised when he spoke to her calmly and kindly. He asked her questions, such as, "what led you to that conclusion" and "what information were you looking at?" He wanted to understand her thought process, and by doing this, he learned more about her capabilities. He said to her, "OK, yes, I follow your reasoning and can see how this happened. Can you now see where you have gone wrong and how this error occurred?" She responded, "yes" and he replied, "I'm glad to have you in our team. This has been a good discussion, and I am confident this learning opportunity will help you to add huge value." She left the conversation feeling quite blown away, as this was the opposite reaction she was expecting. She told us, "I will never ever forget how he made me feel in that moment—it was incredible. I never made that mistake again, and I am proud to say that I have performed even better." This was a great example of providing mana-enhancing feedback. When mistakes are dealt with well, they can be a powerful opportunity to grow, as well as to build connection and loyalty.

As leaders, it's also useful to share when we make mistakes with our team. We are human too, and we can use these as learning opportunities.

A manager in a farm support services organisation shared how he had caused a chemical spill on site. This occurred after hours; he was the only one there. He started cleaning up, ensuring that the environmental regulations were met, and that there would be no issues the next day.

He was in the perfect position to have fixed the issue and moved on, not mentioning it to his team so that he could save face. Instead, he took accountability the next day and shared his mistake with his team. He saw it as a learning opportunity for himself and his team, and it was better to be honest with everyone—including himself. The result was a stronger bond with his team, and a better understanding of best practices to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

The focus of this section has been on dealing with mistakes in a manner that helps our people to learn, and to improve; for the long-term benefit of them, and our teams. However, there will be times when we have tried mentoring, coaching and extra training, and we get to a point where we do need to make the hard call and go through a process of performance managing someone out of the team. In these cases, seeking advice from the HR team, or for smaller organisations, turning to Employment New Zealand for initial resources, or seeking legal advice is recommended. This is to protect both the organisation and to ensure the process is fair and respectful to the person to be released.[74]

74 Employment New Zealand, (2024), Dismissal, https://www.employment.govt.nz/ending-employment/dismissal/

Creating a climate where it is safe to experiment

An indicator of a healthy organisational culture is flourishing innovation. If people are willing to innovate, it means they care enough to want to improve things and they trust their leaders enough to risk challenging the status quo. This ties in with Principles 3.2—Autonomy and 3.3 —Purpose. Consequently, as leaders, we should encourage a culture where it is 'safe to experiment'. This is even more important today in an era of rapid and sustained change.

Making things 'safe to experiment' can supercharge teams by tapping into the enterprising DNA that runs deep in the sector. Even though most experimentation leads to failure, it is far better to have micro-failures to achieve macro-wins. The highly dynamic IT industry often talks about 'failing fast and failing cheap'. If we embrace this mindset, (try, fail, learn, try again, fail better...), we will remain competitive through rapid evolution. This approach maximises the number of ideas we can interact with. To quote double Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling's dictum, "The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas."[75]

A food technologist talked about experimenting with multiple different flavour combinations, food textures, and shelf lives. It was known at the start that most of the experiments would be a dud, but it wouldn't have been possible to find a 'winner' (which she was very proud to share has been a consumer success) without experimenting.

A good way of making it safe to experiment is the innovation cycle, which allows teams to engage with a problem, test their ideas without too much risk and then, as they refine them, commit more resources. The innovation cycle follows four steps: proof of concept, prototype, pilot, and finally minimum viable product. However, in the end it takes leaders with courage to let people experiment and innovate, because it is ultimately the leader who must take responsibility for the failures that inevitably follow.

To make it safe to experiment for our people, we should also consider how we can make it 'safer' for us, when failures do inevitably occur. Here are some examples from the sector to help mitigate the risks and minimise the consequences:

- "The only way for my people to learn how to operate the big machinery is for them to operate the big machinery. So, I am just sensible about when this 'learner driving' happens. Sometimes, this is in the morning, so there is still time in the day to make up for any errors that may be made, and I also avoid 'learner driving' when a massive order has come in".
- "We created a 'watch', 'do', 'teach', 'observe' model. I get my team member to watch me, or another person do the task until they feel confident to have a go themselves. Then they do it, with close supervision. The next step is to watch them teaching someone else how to do it (which could be me or someone else experienced in the team), and then I observe from afar a couple of times. This process minimises the consequences when errors are made while learning."
- "Our boss supports us to test an idea on one of our farms. If it works, we can roll it our further. But if it doesn't, the cost of failure is more manageable than if we did it across the whole business unit."
- "I build in a budget for 'experimentation day'. Once a quarter, led by the team, we trial ideas. If none of them work, it's just like when I go to the races—I take a set amount of money to bet on the horses, and have budgeted to lose it all, and any wins are a bonus. With 'experimentation day', even if nothing 'wins', actually, it was still a good investment in the team's development and team culture."
- "It's all about setting 'decision points' and 'limits'. My people have freedom to try things up to a certain limit, without my approval, and then we have a discussion before it goes to the next level. This gives me some comfort around mitigating the level to which things could go wrong."

75 **Berkun, S., (2010),** The Myths of Innovation, O'Reilly Media, Inc., p. 88.

Enable timely and effective decision-making

It is sometimes said that the difference between a good farmer and an average farmer is a week. In some industries, the difference might even be measured in hours or minutes. One of the biggest decisions we make as leaders, is how we utilise our time.

In short, good, and timely decision-making is vital to success.

Because accountability lies with the leader, Food and Fibre leaders need to be skilled decision-makers. We need to understand when to use intuitive decision-making (see Principle 1: Understand People) and when to use analytical techniques. We should also be conscious of our biases and be able to critically analyse and weigh up the value of information from a diverse set of inputs. In an era where leaders are subject to 'infowhelm' (the feeling of being overwhelmed with too much information), sifting information and weighing its value is more important than ever.

As leaders, we need to be comfortable dealing with incomplete information and making judgement calls when dealing with complex or novel issues. Like lots of small course corrections when four-wheel driving, taking a series of small decisions early can be less risky in dynamic and complex situations than making a few big bets that risk the farm. Equally, in large teams or quickly moving environments, it is not possible to control everything. Successful leaders develop the *art of delegation* and use *mission leadership,* so team members have freedom of action within the leader's overarching intent and the organisation's purpose.

The art of delegation

Delegation is a critical skill for leaders to master. A trap for emerging leaders is the idea we need to know everything and be able to do everything. This is not a leader's role. As leaders, we coordinate and draw the best out of the team, and the team needs us to be able to think and see ahead. This can be challenging to do. If we try to be across everything and get too much into the details, then we'll simply run out of time, stretch ourselves too thin, and potentially burn out. We may reduce the ability for the team to take the initiative. The rule of thumb is to delegate where possible to the lowest competent level closest to the point of action.

Delegation does not release us from overall accountability. Therefore, effective delegation requires us, as leaders, to have built capability within the team. How those in leadership manage the interplay between building the capability of the team (promoting mastery) and then empowering team members closest to the action to make relevant decisions (autonomy, discussed further in Principle 3.2) are all predictors of success.

Effective delegation requires us to be specific about the task, purpose, how to get help, and when the task needs to be completed by. Giving someone a task without a deadline is not delegation, it's a discussion.

Mission leadership

As leaders, we need to be able to generate momentum by establishing a *mission culture* (not a permission culture). As we build the capabilities of our team(s), it is important to create an environment where team members have the autonomy to use their initiative, and in doing so, multiply the ability of the team to achieve its purpose. One way of doing this, is a framework that the military have been using for well over a hundred years: *mission leadership.*

The concept of mission leadership is explained well in Captain David Marquet's bestselling book *Turn the Ship Around: A True Story of Turning Followers into Leaders.*[76] To briefly summarise the key elements, mission leadership unleashes initiative in fast-moving and complex situations, while also ensuring the actions of subordinate leaders are focused on the ultimate objective.

Mission leadership is well suited to a highly distributed sector where teams often operate semi-autonomously, and with technically difficult or unreliable lines of communication. But even where that is not the case, such as in the processing or manufacturing portions of our value chains, there are still significant benefits in creating a culture where team members can exercise freedom within a mission framework.

In simple terms, mission leadership is where team members have freedom of action within the context of the leader's overarching intent and the organisation's purpose—that is, freedom within a framework.

The overarching leader describes *what* needs to be done, and most importantly *why* it needs to be achieved. The mission leader and team determine for themselves *how* to best achieve the mission. Communications are prearranged and maintained throughout the task or mission. But if communications fail and the situation changes, the mission, or task leader has the freedom to change the plan. They can do this because they know the *'why'*, have training, and are expected to think on their feet to achieve the overriding purpose of the mission. Figure 11 is a short set of steps that leaders can use to develop a mission leadership approach. Mission leadership is also very much aligned with Principles 3.2—Autonomy and 3.3—Purpose. As mentioned at the outset the inter-related nature of the principles is a core foundation of this principles-centred model.

Create a mission culture not a permission culture.

76 **Marquet, L. D. (2013).** Turn the Ship Around! A True Story of Turning Followers into Leaders. United Kingdom: Penguin Publishing Group.

Figure 11:
Mission Leadership

CHAPTER 11—PRINCIPLE THREE: BUILD TEAMS

Leaders build teams and teamwork. This is beautifully illustrated by the Māori term for leader, *rangatira,* which combines two words *raranga* (to weave) and *tira* (a group or company of travellers) —therefore meaning to *weave a group of people together for a common purpose.*[77]

A team is people coordinating their efforts for a unified purpose (this is different from a group). To build teams, we as leaders must create an environment where all our team can thrive, and then direct that energy at the task that needs to be achieved. We do this by tapping into three primal needs. These three needs have evolved over millennia to ensure our survival. The first is the need to belong—because safety and security was found within a team. The second is the need for freedom—the ability to be seen within the team for who we are, and to have sufficient autonomy to influence our own fate. The third is the need for meaning and purpose—originally the overriding purpose would have been success of the team because this increased the chances of survival for all.

The three strands or sub-principles of building teams align to these primal needs. They are:

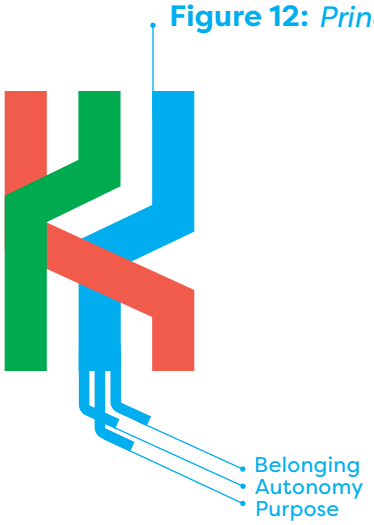
3.1 – Belonging: Leaders create an environment where everyone in their team can bring their whole, authentic, unique self to work and feel truly valued and included.

3.2 – Autonomy: People don't like to be micromanaged. Leaders enable their people to have a sense of control over how, and if possible, when and where, they conduct their tasks.

3.3 – Purpose: People need to know that what they do matters. Leaders ensure their people understand how their task is important to the bigger picture.

As leaders, we weave people together into a team by fostering these three deeply seated human needs: belonging, autonomy, and purpose.

Figure 12: *Principle 3: Build teams*



PRINCIPLE 3.1—BELONGING

As leaders, we must create an environment where every one of our team members feel they belong.

In *Gifts of Imperfection,* Brené Brown explains that the greatest barrier to belonging is fitting in. Fitting in is when we show up to a place of work (or to any setting in life) and we act, dress, behave, speak in a manner that is aligned to what we think is required of us in that setting. We adjust ourselves to fit in.

Human beings *need* to belong, so safety is as much about being accepted and valued as it is about physical safety. Our brains react the same to the prospect of judgement and exclusion as they do to the prospect of physical harm. When people don't feel safe, the part of the brain responsible for processing fear goes into overdrive. The amygdala is responsible for handling memory, decision making, and emotional responses—particularly fear, but also anxiety and aggression. Spending too long in a threat-state (of fight, flight, freeze or befriend) prevents people from being able to think rationally. When people aren't in the right headspace, they cannot fully engage and simply are not as effective.

Belonging on the other hand, is when we can show up as our whole, authentic, unique, 'a little bit weird' self, and feel we are truly valued and included for who we are and what we bring. When people feel safe to do this, they are energised to do their best work instead of trying to fit in. Creating a sense of belonging for all our team members is not just the 'right' thing to do (because we care about our people), it is also commercially smart. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Gallup research has found that engaged teams are 23 percent more profitable than disengaged teams.[78]

Long-gone is the historical adage of "I'm paying you to do your job, not to be happy". Belonging and happiness are directly related, and it is well researched that happiness improves work performance.[79] The benefits to an organisation of happy team members includes increased productivity,[80] greater innovation and less absenteeism,[81] greater loyalty,[82] happier customers, improved retention,[83] and increased profits.[84]

77 Smith, C., Tinirau R., Rattray-Te Mana, H., Barnes, H., Cormack, D., Fitzgerald, E., (2021), Rangatiratanga: Narratives of Racism, Resistance, and Well-being, Te Atawhai o Te Ao, p. 7. https://teatawhai.maori.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rangatiratanga-Chapter.pdf
78 Gallup, (2022)., pp. 4, 6 & 99.
79 Oswald, A., Proto, E., Sgroi, D., (2015), Happiness and Productivity, Journal of Labor Economics 33, no. 4: pp. 789-822. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/681096

Role model belonging

As leaders, we must create an environment where all our people feel they truly belong. This includes us. To do our best work, we also need to show up as our full and authentic self (as was noted in Principle 1.1—Know self). This also ties into the third element of the principles-centred leadership model, the three dimensions of a person, discussed more fully in chapter 13. To truly lead, we need to be able to lead as *whole* people, drawing from *all* parts of our humanity. This includes aligning our physical dimension (doing) *and* our psychological dimension (knowing), *and* our spiritual dimension (being).

Dealing with stereotypes. Sometimes leaders feel they need to behave in a certain way to be accepted or respected as a leader. Many people indicated the 'old school' or 'back in the day' leaders in the sector were typically categorised as: confident, assertive, decisive, extroverted, knowledgeable, stoic, not very empathetic, task rather than relationship focused. And while people may discuss these characteristics as historic, and not relevant today, the ideas remain ingrained in conversations about what we as leaders may expect of ourselves. People who felt they needed to fit a stereotype to be seen as leadership material, confided that they tend to either:

- turn down leadership opportunities;
- modify themselves to be what they perceive to be the right 'type' of leader;
- risk authenticity, but experience disproportionately high levels of self-doubt and feelings of imposter syndrome as a result (something that is particularly common in women).[85]

Findings from this research and from Dr Ellen Joan Ford's doctoral[86] and post-doctoral[87] research on authentic leadership, found that if we are brave enough to be authentic, we show our team members that it is safe for them to be authentic too. And when people feel safe, encouraged, and celebrated to be who they are, they truly belong. And when they truly belong, they do their best work.

There is no one approach to leadership. Being confident, assertive, decisive, extroverted, knowledgeable and stoic may be effective for those who hold these traits as authentically their own. Likewise, being empathetic, relationship-focused and collaborative can also be effective for those people who naturally exhibit these traits. What is important is that, as leaders, we bring the best of ourselves and the best out in our team.

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken. *Oscar Wilde*

Leadership Myths:

- *"I don't like being out in front of everyone, so I won't ever be a good leader".* People who do less talking are often the people who do more listening, and truly understand what is going on in the room. This can be hugely valuable as a leader.
- *"I don't know all the answers, so I'm not yet smart enough to lead others".* Having humility about our levels of expertise can allow us to build relationships with others by seeking feedback from subject matter experts in the team. Further, leadership isn't about technical proficiency; it's about people.
- *"I'm always told I'm too caring, so I wouldn't be capable of leadership".* As Theodore Roosevelt famously said, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." People go the extra mile when they know their leader cares about them.

80 Ibid
81 Tenney, E., Poole, J., Diener, E., (2016), Does Positivity Enhance Work Performance? Why, When, and What We Don't Know, Research in Organizational Behaviour 36: 27 - 46.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309878713_Does_positivity_enhance_work_performance_Why_when_and_what
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84 Oswald, A. et al., Happiness and Productivity.
85 Clance, P., Imes, S., (1978), The Impostor Phenomenon in High Achieving Women: Dynamics and Therapeutic Intervention, Psychotherapy: Theory, research and practice, Vol 15, #3, pp. 241-247
86 Ford, Ellen Joan, June (2019), The social well-being of women officers who have left the NZ Army.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/65e7cbe87e6edc2b3c703d13/t/PhD-Ellen-Joan-Nelson.-03017095.pdf
87 Ford, Ellen Joan, June (2020), Barriers to the recruitment and retention of women in the NZ Army.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/1710755277427/505520268-Barriers-to-Recruitment-and-Retention-NZ-Army-Final-1.pdf

Creating belonging for all

Belonging, as a concept, ties closely into the earlier parts of this research, linking with the importance of understanding self and understanding others. We need to understand and know our people, to foster a sense of belonging for them. As was discussed in Principle 1.2—Know others: everyone is different. For example, we each have different personalities, emotional drivers, feelings around appropriateness, feedback preferences, skills, talents, and so on. To solve complex challenges, it is important to harness the benefits of this diversity. The team's collective range of talents, perspectives, experiences, connections, and approaches all add to the power of problem solving. But diversity on its own means nothing if there is not also inclusion. Inclusion allows people to let their guard down and focus their full talents on the team's purpose.

Being emotionally available for our team and demonstrating empathy (putting ourselves in their boots) is a key aspect to creating belonging for all.

Photo credit: Dan 'Maxy' Max

A fishing leader had new migrant workers join his team. One of the team members was Muslim and needed time each day to pray. Initially, the boss was completely unaware of the significance of this. But once he realised, he implemented a flexible approach that showed that this team member wasn't out of place. The manager described it as a "game-changer" since the team member could be respected as his full-self while at work. The team member then relaxed and was a better contributor to the team.

We heard of a member of a team whose daughter had serious health issues. When his daughter struggled, he struggled too. But he appreciated that he could talk with his boss about his worries. The result was impressive. Rather than being "a shell of myself all day", he explained that being able to talk to his boss, get it off his chest, and know that he was allowed to be human, made a huge difference to his capacity and capability to contribute to his team at work. The sense of belonging that came from his boss showing he cared made a material difference to his quality of life and work.

Earlier, we introduced the woman who ran the orchard with kaimahi at the centre. A sense of belonging was imperative to her success. As a young solo mum, her employers had given her a chance and supported her when her kids were sick. Because she had a sense of belonging within that team—that she was valued as a whole person, not just for her contributions as an employee, but also as a whole person—she was able to continue to bring her best. Creating belonging means recognising and valuing people for all their complexities.

A LACK OF BELONGING

The absence of a sense of belonging can do lasting damage.

A young woman in the forestry sector reported that she had a well-meaning older male boss who, struggled to talk to her because of her gender and age. “I see the boss talking to guys, but not to me,” she explained. The exclusion made her feel like she didn’t belong. “I’m not really part of the team, and I’m not being seen. I feel small.” The result was a slow-growing resentment: since she didn’t know how to learn from him, she didn’t know how she could progress. When we spoke with her, she was getting ready to leave her role.

Each morning, at the toolbox meeting, a manager had a habit of belittling one of the team members in front of the entire team. The culture was that this was acceptable, but it was clear this wasn’t banter-led or happening from a place of safety. As a result, team members kept leaving; they didn’t feel they were valued.

A lab technician recalled a previous manager making sexual comments about a team member in a group setting. It was far from mana-enhancing for the manager, or for the young woman who was the subject of the belittlement. It also implicitly condoned the behaviour since the boss was participating in it. Sexual harassment is never ok.

A sure way to reduce a sense of belonging is by running people down, either in public or in private. Not only does it make us as a leader look bad when we’re prepared to gossip, but it also gives tacit approval to gossiping and negative talk behind people’s backs. This is one of the more destructive forms of toxic behaviour and has the potential to result in lost productivity among other things. It also makes an individual wonder what the leader is saying about them behind their back. It makes people wary and look for hidden meanings, a sure sign that trust has been broken. The absence of trust is ground zero of a dysfunctional team.

Further examples of a lack of belonging are what goes unseen and undervalued. A classic issue in some parts of the sector is that partners, often women, many of them mothers, are rendered invisible next to their male counterparts. This is sometimes referred to as ‘the invisible farmer’ issue, where the male figure is singled out as the de facto leader, while the female figure is assumed to be in a supporting role.

The man we spoke with was present with his wife, the farm manager, and the manager’s wife at a ram sale. All four people are partners in the farming business, and all contribute to daily operations. The ram buyer spoke first and foremost to the men in the situation and ignored the women—a clear example of the ‘invisible farmer’ issue.

A great deal of work goes unseen, underappreciated, and under-utilised. Industry has a significant opportunity to recognise the important role women play in helping to counter workforce shortages. It's no longer sufficient to assume the 'traditional roles' remain. In fact, with the increasing complexity of production systems, farming businesses, and continually changing regulatory, environmental, and market environments, a silent leadership role-flip is occurring in many enterprises.

In the past, when most decisions occurred within the farm, orchard, or forest gate, the farmer, grower, or harvester was the 'CEO' of the enterprise; their spouse typically played an enabling role but had little voice in the business. In many of these cases, but not all; the farmer, grower, or harvester has been the man, and the spouse has been the woman. As new complexities are forcing enterprises to be more attuned to external drivers, the 'spouse' is often forced to step up into the 'silent CEO' role to take on the strategic engagement, finance, people management, and repositioning of the business within a rapidly changing external environment. The farmer, grower, or harvester still leads the operations, almost in a 'chief of operations' role.

The shifting paradigm does not appear to be fully recognised yet, even by women. However, it is creating increased demand for female focused training, empowerment, and leadership programmes delivered by the likes of Agri-Women's Development Trust, or increased uptake by women of the Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme, the Nuffield New Zealand Farming Scholarship, and other leadership programmes. Numerous examples of this flip were seen occurring during our research. It was also observed in adjacent sectors, like the construction industry, where professionalisation of small to medium businesses is further advanced, as industry evolves to meet regulatory changes and protect its social licence.

Acknowledging and valuing the leadership roles these women are assuming is essential to building their sense of belonging as leaders, both within their farming enterprise, and within the wider Food and Fibre sector.

While blind spots are inherited, assumed, accidental, and occasionally intentional, their impact is lasting. The remedy is mindfulness, and we must not make assumptions based on issues such as gender, clothing, or weathered features. Our role as leaders is to ask more and assume less—we need to be mindful of blind spots that might cloud our judgement or affect those we speak to.

Our job as leaders is to ask more and assume less.

PRINCIPLE 3.2—AUTONOMY

People don't want to be micromanaged. They like to have a sense of control over how, and if possible, when and where, they conduct their tasks. To give our people more autonomy, we need to focus more on the outputs we want them to achieve, and less on their inputs (methods, hours, and location required to deliver those outputs).

A sense of autonomy is key to helping people feel as though they have agency in their work and lives. It is linked to a range of positive psychological outcomes from improved memory and a greater sense of self, to helping people feel stable while also flexible enough to adapt in the face of conflict or change. Agency is our power, or ability, to affect our future,[88] the feeling that we're in the driver's seat, in control. We get agency through autonomy.

A sense of autonomy creates better psychological wellbeing,[89] whereas a lack of control can lead to depression and anxiety.[90] In the end, it is as simple as giving people choice. Nobel Prize winner Professor Amartya Sen, who coined the term 'well-being economics', says that a lack of control over how we perform our jobs, including having no control over our schedules, is one of the leading causes of burnout.

When and where the work gets done

Flexible working refers to autonomy over 'when' and 'where' the work gets done. The desire for more flexibility and autonomy of time emerged as a strong theme in the data for this research. This was expressed by a wide spread of demographics across the sector, but was particularly noted by parents. In many cases it is the mums who carry the bulk of the parenting load, alongside their paid work. As Dr Ellen Joan Ford notes, "The societal-wide tension that expects parents to work as though they don't have children, and parent as though they don't have a job" is well at play in our sector too.[91]

There is a real opportunity for us to think differently about the way we construct work. Examples from Aotearoa New Zealand include Andrew Barnes' 4 day week (which has made significant global impact),[92] Gillian Brookes' work on Flexperts,[93] and Dr Ellen Joan Ford's #WorkSchoolHours principles. These principles promote a holistic way of working that focuses on; outputs delivered rather than time spent at work, flexibility in how outputs are delivered, and increased freedom for people to integrate their lives and work so that value to be maximised in both spheres.

Flexible working conditions are increasingly important to team wellbeing, happiness, motivation, and productivity.[94] In a post Covid-19 world where mobile technology is prolific, employees have realised they can achieve their outputs and have more flexible working conditions. The 2021 *Flexonomics* report, a large-scale research project in the United Kingdom, found that the current levels of flexible working contribute a staggering £37 billion per year to the UK economy.[95] In contrast, refusing requests for flexible working cost UK businesses close to £2 billion per year. In our research we saw several progressive enterprises that are already reaping the benefits of flexible working conditions.

88 'Take Control of Your Life: The Concept of Agency and Its Four Helpers', Pattison Professional Counselling and Meditation Center. n.d. https://www.ppccfl.com/blog/take-control-of-your-life-the-concept-of-agency-and-its-four-helpers/

89 Hong, J., Lachman, M., Charles, S., Chen, Y., Wilson, C., Nakamura, J., VanderWeele, T., and Kim, E., (2021), The Positive Influence of Sense of Control on Physical, Behavioral, and Psychosocial Health in Older Adults: An Outcome-Wide Approach, Preventative Medicine 146, no. 106612. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106612

90 Cardiac College. What is Sense of Control?, Health eUniversity. https:// www.healtheuniversity.ca/EN/CardiacCollege/Wellbeing/Stress_And_Sense_Of_Control/Pages/sense-of-control.aspx

91 Ford, E., #WorkSchoolHours, p. 14.

92 Barnes, A., (2020), The 4 Day Week: How the Flexible Work Revolution Can Increase Productivity, Profitability and Well-being, and Create a Sustainable Future, Little Brown Book Group.

93 Brookes, G., (2023), Flexperts: Getting the Best from Flex in a World That's Ever Changing, Gillian Brookes.

94 Sadler, D., (April 4, 2023), Flexible Workers are Happier and Better Employees, Information Age, ACS. https://ia.acs.org.au/article/2023/flexible-workers-are-happier-and-better-employees.html

95 Leckie, C., Munroe, R., McAlpine, M., (November 2021), Flexonomics: The Economic and Fiscal Value of Flexible Working, Pragmatix Advisory. https://www.motherpukka.co.uk/wp-content/%20uploads/2021/12/2021-11-12-CONFIDENTIAL-Flexonomics-byPragmatix-2.pdf

One leader talked about a large Māori farming enterprise that employed a significant number of people from the community. Instead of stipulating the hours of work, and then finding people to fit into that schedule, they completely flipped the model. The focus became understanding the needs of the people and coordinating the work schedule with their obligations. "We had to think about the parents who needed to be with young children before and after school, elderly workers whose bodies now struggled with long hours of physical activity, our rangatahi, who needed to work around their school classes. We used this as our starting point, and work then happened around that." Not only did this support the well-being of their people (which directly linked to improved organisational performance), the productivity, retention and profits came too.

It is true there are many jobs in our sector where people need to be onsite at the same time as their colleagues. This makes it all too easy to say, "flexibility won't work for us" or, "we don't need to worry about flexible working in our organisation" and stop any further thinking.

Flexible working practices should, as the name says, be flexible. It is unrealistic to think we can apply flexible working practices universally across an organisation. The goal is to apply them where possible. For example, flexible working for a dairy milker looks different to flexible working for a food lab technician, someone on a fishing vessel, a processor in a kiwifruit packhouse, a marketing rep, or a rural bank manager. Providing flexible working conditions is not us, as leaders, bending over backwards for our team and providing them hand-outs. People are required to do their job, do it well, and do it within the required timeframe—there is no suggestion that quality and production should reduce. The part that is up for discussion is when, where, and how the job gets done.

Organisations that embrace flexibility will maximise the pool of talent they can recruit from. For those that remain rigid, will increasingly struggle to attract and retain talent in an era where people have more choices over where they work and who they work with.

Here are some questions that we as leaders can discuss with our teams, to see where flexible working could apply:

• Could we trial finishing early once a week, to align with something of value to the team (perhaps a school collection, or a sporting activity), and see how that goes? Could we do this in a 'rolling roster' system, so we each finish early on a different day?

• Could we move our start or finish times to the left or right, to better align with other activities?

• What could our core hours be, and is there room for flexibility around that?

• Can we provide more flexibility to support us all to attend things that matter? E.g., a child's sporting event, visiting an elderly relative, training for a marathon, traveling for a special event, or any other significant personal activity.

• Are there some tasks within our roles that could be done from home? Many of our tasks may be practical and 'onsite', but are there some administration tasks we could do at home instead, at a time that suits?

• What are the things we need to do together? And what could we do individually?

• What are the days and times that we have meetings? Could these be scheduled differently?

•How are we structuring our production cycles? What are the due dates we need to consider, or cadences we want to adhere to? Of course, seasonal and environmental considerations are hugely important in the sector, but could we factor other considerations, such as avoiding big tasks during school holiday periods?

• Do we need to have fixed durations for our shifts? Could we stagger some of them?

There are some further examples on the following page, of people in the sector successfully applying flexible working conditions. The intention here is not to read through, and think, *no, that wouldn't apply for my organisation.* Instead, think about how these examples could be tweaked and applied to make positive change. It's about thinking *where might this work* and *where could this be applied?*

One business manager introduced an app where workers could select shifts and tasks, so the people who wanted to spend more time milking versus other tasks had the autonomy to choose. Shifts can be broken into smaller chunks, giving staff more freedom to select suitable shifts. A forestry leader discussed a similar concept for their team.

The owner of a warehousing facility in the sector approached some mothers who weren't currently in paid work, with an opportunity. Her team received, sorted, and unpacked deliveries, then packed, resorted, and stacked outgoing parcels onto new pallets. The owner had been struggling to find staff through traditional means but found mums keen to work during school hours—so she started an experiment. Without providing any information about the number of pallets that were typically unloaded and reloaded in a day, she just told the new team, "This is the work we need to get done today, before you all leave to collect your kids from school." Rather than taking eight hours—the time it would normally take—the task was completed in just five hours. The same productivity was maintained every day over two weeks of work (so not just a fluke). So, she paid them all full eight-hour per day wages.

A large professional services organisation in the sector told us they had moved their 8:30 a.m. team meetings to be within school hours. Instead of having multiple parents stressed and trying to juggle school drop-offs and dialling in to a team call, a minor timing amendment made a tangible difference for many of their people.

Enabling flexibility can take many forms. Participating in an advisory board often means travelling to a major centre for a day or overnight—something that can preclude those who work rurally, and especially those who want to manage or work on a farm and have young children, or other dependent responsibilities such as care for an elderly relative. Advisory teams and governance-level leaders can foster autonomy by generating creative solutions that support all people involved. If the purpose of an advisory board is to make good decisions, then this can occur online, in different locations, and in ways that engage people with diverse circumstances and needs.

Several contributors to this research spoke about their fear that flexible working would erode team culture if people were not all working in the same location at the same time. Too often organisations think culture will be created because people are all onsite together, but creating culture needs to be much more intentional than that. It's the proactive work we as leaders do to drive morale, allow people to bond, and promote teamwork. Conversations create culture, and the ones that we can have about how to make work really work for each of our team members are powerful culture creators.

How the work gets done

Leaders give their teams and people autonomy by setting challenges, then giving them room to rise to them according to their individual strengths and abilities.

Once again, this builds on concepts discussed in previous sections, (Principle 1.2 – Know others, and mission culture and mission leadership in Principle 2.2).

The alternative will be all too familiar to many readers. This is where a team member is instructed by a superior to follow instructions unquestioningly—an act that removes the possibility of self-direction or autonomy.

As leaders, we need to eliminate micromanagement. It is demotivating and stifles team development. It keeps us mired in the day-to-day rather than being free to focus on the future. We also start to lose our effectiveness if we become too focused on doing or controlling one task, instead of coordinating our team to achieve multiple tasks.

In essence, we need to trust our people have the expertise we recognised when we hired them, or after we have trained them. If a leader operates with an autocratic style, over time they will breed a permission culture instead of a mission culture. Autonomy in this setting is like *mission leadership* (See Principle 2.2 – Accountability: Mission leadership) where team members have freedom of action, within the context of the leader's overarching intent and the organisation's purpose.

As leaders, we give our team projects that they can be responsible for and that stretch them. Initially it does not matter if projects are small, if they offer the chance of growth and discovery.

There are countless opportunities to foster learning—all leaders need to do is engage their teams.

We heard from one Food and Fibre leader who reflected on a moment from decades earlier that showed them what bad leadership looked like: "I remember it vividly. Really vividly. The boss said to me, 'You're not paid to think. You're here to do what I say.'"

One farming cadet spoke enthusiastically about how they loved getting tasks that pushed them just beyond their comfort zone. Rather than being locked into a few micromanaged tasks, they were able to learn and grow on the job. Another enjoyed being sent to networking events where they could see how other parts of the industry operate.

A rural repairs and maintenance company found autonomy creates a unique energy in the team and directly benefits their customer relationships and reputation. The team on the ground were given the autonomy to work with customers and make decisions, within wider guidelines, that would best suit each customer's situation. This had the effect of removing their slowest bureaucratic practices. With faster and more tailored support, customers were happier. The feedback was impressive and customer loyalty increased.

When giving people autonomy, it helps to find their passions and give them opportunities to express them in the context of the organisation.

A senior agribusiness leader leveraged the passions of individual business managers to drive improvement across the whole organisation. The leader learned what each manager was most enthusiastic about, and then enabled them to lead the organisation's innovation in that space. For example, one manager was passionate about animal welfare—so they were upskilled in that area and now contribute to company-wide decisions on animal welfare improvements. Another was passionate about dairy farming technology and is finding ways to make life easier for everyone (and the animals) by utilising technology. The business was prepared to provide the support to allow each leader to live with autonomy and purpose through their roles.

This example further demonstrates the different ways that people can progress in their leadership pathways, (See Part 3: How we grow leadership). As business managers, these leaders were already moving up in terms of their leadership 'rank'. But this gave them the opportunity to advance their specialist leadership progression too.

PRINCIPLE 3.3—PURPOSE

People need to know that what they do matters. They need to understand the pieces of the puzzle they contribute to and how these fit into the organisation's overall goals.

When people understand the 'why', and they believe in it, they will go to incredible lengths. History is full of examples of people willingly undertaking endeavours (both good and bad) if they believe in the purpose, enjoy the team environment, and know that people have their back. This is very clearly seen in charitable entities; people often go to extraordinary lengths because they believe in the purpose.

Purpose and culture should be aligned. But the larger an organisation is, the more cultures and sub-cultures it will have (this is further discussed in Chapter 12—High-performing teams). What is important is that there is a single galvanising purpose.

Advantage of being purpose-led

Research shows businesses frequently outperform their competitors when they integrate purpose into their strategy and act towards something bigger than their products or services.[96] Purpose-led businesses balance profit and purpose—achieving both positive financial returns and wider social outcomes, which their people support. The Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE) predicts steady growth in the number of purpose-led businesses and a competitive disadvantage for companies that are not purpose-led.[97]

Power of communicating purpose through stories

Much of the art in creating a team environment is in making sure the purpose of the work is clearly articulated.

This is best achieved by wrapping the purpose in stories that continually demonstrate the value of the work. Stories are the language of leaders. They become ngā kete (the baskets) that hold the team culture and purpose.

Purpose doesn't have to be grand, or about changing the world, saving lives, improving animal health, or rescuing the planet (although, these are very noble, and do drive many people in the sector). People simply want to know why they're doing a task; this is what makes it meaningful. In contrast, it is hugely demotivating to do a task, especially one that isn't particularly enjoyable, and be thinking, "I have no idea why my boss wants me to do this." Further, being able to link purpose to action also supports the autonomy of our people.

96 Malnight, W., Buche, I., Dhanaraj, C., (October 2019), Put Purpose at the Core of Your Strategy. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2019/09/put-purpose-at-the-core-of-your-strategy

97 Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, (November 2022), The future of business for Aotearoa New Zealand: An exploration of two trends influencing productivity and wellbeing – purpose-led business and use of blockchain technology, p. 13. https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/mbie-ltib-the-future-of-business-for-aotearoa-new-zealand.pdf

A young horticulturalist recounted this story to us. She had been given the task of pruning tomatoes. Before she started, her boss took the time to teach her *why* it was important and the principles of pruning. She told us that she learned that "when it comes to growing tomatoes, it is important to prune the plants at the suckers, just before the fruiting stage. This encourages more fruiting and more productive plants, since they invest more of their energy into the produce and less into leafy growth." She went on to say that once she understood the task, she was then given the discretion to manage the tomato nipping according to her judgement.

Understanding the *why* gave her purpose, she felt like she could more fully contribute to the success of the business. As a result, she also gained a sense of autonomy and belonging. A far better outcome than just being instructed to prune where told.

A leader in the forestry sector talked about a competition he had with his team called 'What does it cost?' Every time he needed to buy something for the work site, replace a tool, repair a piece of equipment, or re-fuel machinery, he got his team to guess what it would cost. This became a fun competition, and he rewarded the winner by shouting their meal at the monthly team dinner. But his reason for doing this was more than just building morale: it helped his team learn the costs of the business. Knowing the cost of replacing parts made the purpose behind servicing and maintaining the equipment clearer.

A farm manager directed one of the team to go and put a fence up in a particular location and asked how they might be able to get the job done faster. Full of good ideas, the team member suggested they procure a larger vehicle to transport all the fence posts in one go, saving time going back and forth on the quad bike. However, when he understood the purpose of having a fence there in the first place, that changed the game. The question shifted from 'How do we do this task better?' to look instead at '*why* are we even doing this task and how might we be able to achieve the outcome in a different way?' The ground where that fence needed to go was tricky terrain; it was going to take a long time to install the fence there, no matter which way the posts were transported. When the larger purpose was clear, so was the solution: a certain area of specific pasture type was required for grazing, so the team member suggested a different location with simpler terrain, and the fencing job became much easier without changing the outcome. This same type of thinking is what leads to technological advances in the sector, a prime example being Halter's® virtual fencing systems.

Once the *'why'* has been linked to the action, it becomes much easier for a team member to operate autonomously and independently. Sometimes that *'why'* comes from above, and other times it comes from the team itself.

One organisation we spoke to had developed a process for dealing with oil spills that all the team members adhered to. Not just because they needed to clean up spills for auditing purposes, but also because they took pride in their space. "We don't work in a pigsty," they said.

When we explain the purpose, and give our team the autonomy to achieve it, it also lightens our load as leaders, as was noted in Principle 3.2.

Their cleanliness was their way of identifying that the facilities were theirs, and that they were working in ways that supported the hygiene and practices of everyone.

A dairy farm manager shared the story of his farm's transformation after learning about the benefits of building belonging, autonomy, and purpose. Initially he had been allocating his team members to the required tasks (fence repairs, milking, pest and weed control, etc.) on a whiteboard hung up in the milking shed. He then changed his model. Instead, he started the next week by writing up the overall list of everything that needed to get done that week, and then asked his team to discuss how best they wanted to achieve all those things. The team started talking to each other. They revealed jobs they liked to do, where they felt their strengths lay, and any time constraints and physical limitations they were working around. They came up with a way to share the work that was required.

Powerful things happen when we talk openly and create alignment around a purpose. People rise to the occasion of figuring out how best to achieve what needs to be done. And we can do this to work out the ways the team can also work together flexibly. **Here are some example discussion points we could have with our teams, to build a sense of purpose:**

- How might we best achieve our outputs and overall purpose as a team?
- Do we know what actions move us closer to achieving our strategic outputs or priorities? And what tasks or activities are taking us further away or don't contribute to our purpose?
- Are there things that we spend our day doing that we don't quite understand the importance of, or know why we are really doing them?
- How can we get more from our meetings? Are there meetings that could be minimised or dropped? (That said, bonding as a team or building morale can be a very valid meeting outcome for developing organisational success.)
- Who has any ideas that would help improve effectiveness?
- Where can we apply Lean principles to create efficiencies and reduce bottlenecks?
- In what places could we benefit from batching certain tasks or blocking time for activities to avoid switching so often or ending up with scattered and useless bits of 'time confetti'?
- Are there things we should outsource? Areas that aren't our strengths or core skills that we could trust an expert to deliver on, freeing us up to focus where we add the greatest value.

CHAPTER 12—HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

Having discussed the basics of building a team, we now turn to high-performance teams. If the sector is to achieve its potential, we need as many high-performing teams as we can get. High-performing teams all need belonging, autonomy, and purpose. This chapter amplifies the third principle of leadership 'build teams' and covers the following points:

- **What are high-performing teams?** Teams that achieve superior results.
- **The concept of many teams.** We all belong in many teams.
- **High-performance team culture.** Simply normal people working together brilliantly.
- **Types of teams.** Centralised, networked and task-organised teams work in direct or distributed ways.
- **Characteristics of high-performing teams.** A tabulation of the most cited research.
- **Finding flow.** Flow is a state of collective intelligence that occurs when teams are highly attuned to each other and working in synergy for a common purpose.
- **Organisational physics.** Considerations and principles to structure teams for performance.

What are high-performing teams?

As discussed earlier, a collection of people doing their individual best are not a team: they are a group. A team comprises people coordinating their efforts for a unified purpose. So, what sets a high-performing team apart from a normal team?

Bottom-line, high-performing teams achieve superior results. They're teams that have reached advanced stages of their development, are highly effective and produce superior performances compared to other teams.[98] As a rule of thumb, they achieve results in the top 20 percent of all teams. For the most motivated of us there is such a thing as *hyper*-performing teams that consistently achieve results in the top two percent of all teams in their field. However, for now, we will just focus on high-performing teams.

According to researchers Katzenbach and Smith, high-performing teams share some common characteristics.[99] Team members have complimentary skills (diversity); the team has a clear and meaningful purpose and sets clear objectives; and team members hold each other mutually accountable for the outcomes. They establish clear ways of working (systems) and adhere to basic team design principles (organisational physics). To achieve results in the top 20 percent requires high levels of trust, clear lines of communication, high levels of coordination, and a positive working atmosphere. In short, high-performing teams are highly cohesive.

We belong in multiple teams

Before we dig deeper into high-performing teams, it is worth noting that we all belong in multiple teams at any one time, and not just in the context of work.

Teams of people come together for sports days. Our families are also teams, as are our communities. Plus, we invariably belong to multiple teams at work, be they formal teams with structures and roles that are well-defined and long-standing, or temporary teams that come together for a specific time and purpose. For example, a farm or orchard manager will have kaimahi in their team. But there are also people who come onto the property, including bankers, investors, technical experts, and so on, who together form a networked team that supports the enterprise. This gives us plenty of opportunities to develop high-performing teams in many aspects of our lives.

High-performance team culture vs a team of high performers

The exciting thing is that a high-performance team is not a group of superstars: it is simply normal people working together brilliantly. In a study by Harvard Business School, it was found that an average worker in a highly functioning team earns the company more than a superstar in a dysfunctional team.[100]

This means high-performance is within reach of all of us. Each time people come together, there is potential to form a high-functioning team. We just need to show up and work together well.

Each team will have a unique culture, even in cases where the team is largely made up of people from the same organisation. This is because each team has a particular purpose, specific environmental conditions it works in and, crucially, is made up of different people, with different backgrounds.

Some societal or work cultures will be more communal and collective, while others will be more individualistic, or task-orientated, matching the environment and capabilities of the individuals who make up that team. For example, a community enterprise that values connection and stability will probably prioritise support and caring. A team picking fruit to meet a tight deadline or a financial incentive to support their village might have a task-focused culture that emphasises initiative and endurance. Equally, a team that designs safety structures or uses dangerous chemicals might develop a culture of process and precision. In all these examples, the three fundamentals still apply: *belonging* and *autonomy* of the people in the team, and the *purpose* they are pursuing as a team. This should be encouraged. The role of us as the leader, is to steer the culture towards one that best fits the goals of the team and allows the team to work alongside other teams.

If team cultures knit together within the larger organisation and competition between them does not become toxic, it is healthy to have many different cultures within an organisation. In fact, it's inevitable. Organisational culture is the sum of all the team cultures within the organisation that come together in a rich and multifaceted tapestry. As leaders our role is to weave these cultures together. What is important is that culture should always serve the organisation's purpose. So, while high-performing organisations have a single overarching purpose, their culture is typically multifaceted.

98 Jeanes, E. (2019). A Dictionary of Organizational Behaviour. Oxford University Press. https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191843273.001.0001/acref-9780191843273-e-141
99 Katzenbach, J., Smith, D., (November 2015), The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization, Harvard Business Review Press.
100 Housman M., Minor D., (2015), Toxic Workers (Working Paper 16-057), Harvard Business School, p. 3. https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/16-057_d45c0b4f-fa19-49de-8f1b-4b12fe054fea.pdf

There are many different types of teams. Below are several that are common to the sector.

Common ways teams work

• **Direct.** Direct working generally refers to a team that operates in the same physical space or area, such as a packhouse, fishing boat, farm, or forestry gang.

• **Distributed.** Distributed working might involve teams across the country or the world, working virtually or as physical teams working in different locations.

Each way of working will have different ways of connecting as a result.

Three common types of teams

• **Centralised team.** Centralised teams have a clear hierarchy and lines of authority and accountability between members. Each team member's position in the team can be shown in a wire diagram (i.e., on a farm or in an office, where generally everyone interacts or can see everyone else).

A centralised team is normally organised functionally (by specialisation), by division (e.g. by geographic region) or in a matrix (e.g. where specialists have cross-cutting responsibilities to other teams).

• **Networked teams.** Networked teams do not rely on the traditional top-down hierarchy. Instead, they are made up of independent or semi-independent people with intersecting interests or values and come together to achieve specific results. Leaders can still lead here, but generally don't have formal authority over others in the network.

Many farmers use networked teams. For instance, the average sheep and beef farm only has 2.5 full time employees, but they have a large, networked team of stock agents, 'fert reps', vets, bankers, and accountants, to name a few. In networked teams, formal authority is low, so to function they rely heavily on relationships and clear and timely communications.

• **Task-organised teams.** Task-organised teams (sometimes called taskforces) are often (but not always) temporary teams that come together for a specific task or purpose. They are defined by the task they are formed to address, not the organisation they come from. For example, people within a catchment area might form a catchment group (or even better, a catchment team). The power of task-organised teams is their ability to galvanise multi-disciplinary talent in support of a defined purpose (and often for a defined period). This creates energy and productivity.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS: CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS.

The characteristics of high-performance most frequently evidenced in research studies are listed in Figure 13 on the following page.

Figure 13:

Most cited characteristics of high-performance teams[101]

	13 Elements of high-performance teams	10 Characteristics of high-performance team members	Eight environmental enablers
Cultural	• Trust • Self-efficacy • Emotional intelligence • Willingness to cooperate • Mutual support and encouragement • Stories and emotion sharing	• Positive attitudes • Respect for others • Emotional intelligence • Personality fit • Performance orientation	• Leadership of the team • Work satisfaction • A low level of defensive and guarding activities • Team self-selection
Conceptual	• Shared vision • Shared leadership • Clear roles and responsibilities • A development mindset	• Intelligence • Motivation • Organisational commitment • Learning/development/mastery orientation • Knowledge and expertise	
Structural	• Size (teams of 10 or less) • Diversity • External coach		• Goal setting • High level of external communication capability • Work/role identification

Finding flow

On close inspection, there's a central theme in all the common characteristics of high-performing teams: in addition to high levels of belonging, autonomy, and purpose, they have self-efficacy. A team with high self-efficacy believes they are equal to any challenge. By contrast, when a team with low self-efficacy is faced with a challenge, it is more likely to avoid it. Sources of self-efficacy include mastery of skills, self-confidence, and encouragement. Of these, mastery is the most important. High-performing teams have put the work in (success favours the prepared), and they believe they can win.[102] Apart from putting the work in to know their skills and roles, they have also put the work in to know each other.

When team members have built camaraderie (typically through shared meals, shared experiences, and shared trials), it is possible to get to a point where they know and respect each other so well that it is 'safe' to have a dynamic of radical candour. Bestselling author Kim Scott describes radical candour as "caring personally while challenging directly [to provide] guidance that's both kind and clear, specific and sincere."[103] We might call this 'mutual accountability that is mana-enhancing,' as was discussed in Principle 2.1: Service. At this point, teammates can anticipate each other's responses and actions. This synchrony is where they find flow.

Recent neuroscience work suggests that "team flow creates a hyper-cognitive state between the team members."[104] When we are in flow, our brains find a synchrony that allows us to operate with collective intelligence at both the conscious and sub-conscious levels. Or more simply, we are highly attuned to each other's efforts in pursuit of a common purpose. Reaching this level of synchrony is almost impossible if your team is too big.

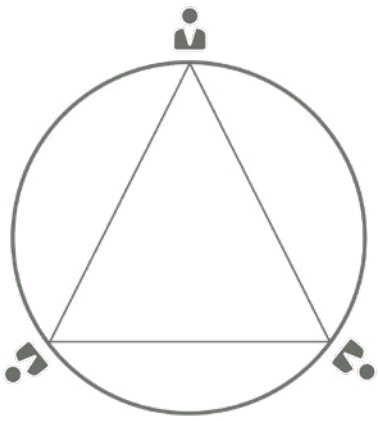
A senior leader reflected on his younger days in a shearing gang. "We were a gun team. We just knew what each other needed. It didn't matter if it was the ganger, the presser or the rousey, we were all in rhythm together. It made such a difference being in a team that worked well together. I'd worked in other teams, even one that had the local shearing champion, but they were more 'stop start' because we weren't in tune with each other."

101 Adapted from research by the Oxford Review **https://oxford-review.com/**
102 **Artino AR Jr. (May 2012),** Academic self-efficacy: from educational theory to instructional practice. Perspectives on Medical Education, 2012 May;1(2): p. 78. **https://storage.googleapis.com/jnl-up-j-pme-files/journals/1/articles/789/637cced2e5855.pdf**
103 **Scott, K. (2019),** Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity, St Martin's Press.
104 **Shehata, M., et al, (2021),** Team flow is a unique brain state associated with enhanced information integration and inter-brain synchrony, eN euro, p. 27. **https://www.eneuro.org/content/eneuro/early/2021/09/24/ENEURO.0133-21.2021.full.pdf**

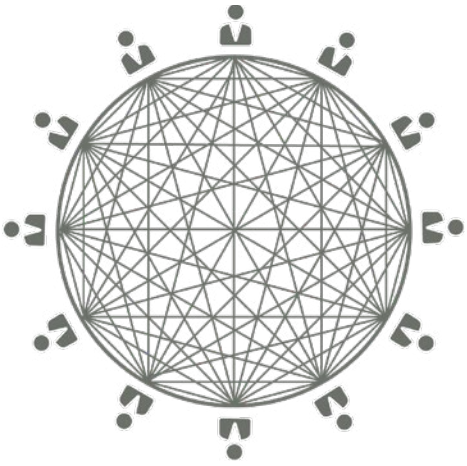
Organisational physics

Small teams perform better.
There is a reason that military special forces are built on teams of four to six, and the All Blacks are made up of smaller teams too (the forwards and the backs). When teams become too big, it becomes harder to coordinate and connect. To illustrate this point, Figure 14 maps the lines of communications between a team of three and a team of 12. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos puts it this way: "If you can't feed a team with two pizzas, it's too large." Stanford Professor Bob Sutton puts it more bluntly: "Big teams suck." As a rule of thumb, high-performance teams have fewer than 10 people.

Figure 14:
Keep teams smaller than 10 people



Lines of communication
in a 3-person team



Lines of communication
in a 12-person team

When it comes to organisational design, it is important to think about the size of teams, and as an organisation grows, build it as a team of teams. This principle works at scale. For instance, the Army is based on *fire teams* of three. Three fire teams are then teamed up into *Sections* of nine. Three sections of nine make up a *Platoon,* three *Platoons* make a *Company,* three rifle companies make up a *Battalion,* and so it goes, sometimes to organisations numbered in the hundreds of thousands.

Organisational structures.
Throughout this research we have talked about the human dimension of leading and leadership. We have focused on the team-level of leadership because teams are the basic building blocks of all successful enterprises from family and whanau-based enterprises to profit-making corporates or for-purpose organisations with a charitable soul.

We now lift our sights to touch on some principles for structuring organisations to achieve high-performance. The focus of this section is organisational structures, not systems. For those interested in delving into performance systems, we encourage you to explore the breakthrough work by Jana Hocken on Lean dairy farming.[105]

Edwards Demming, the father of the quality movement that revolutionised Japan's post-World War II economy, observed that "a bad system will defeat a good person every time." For this reason, leaders would also do well to think critically about how they structure the roles and authorities within their team(s).

The following considerations have been adapted from Lex Sisney, who coined the term 'organisational physics'. Sisney identifies three design principles that need consideration when putting an organisation together:

• **Functions.** Functions are the core activities required to achieve the team's or organisation's purpose.

• **Placement.** Placement relates to where different functions are placed within an organisation and how they interact with other functions.

• **Authority.** Authority relates to the concept of autonomy—and in particular, the ability for functions to perform their core role without undue control.

Below are seven classic mistakes in organisational design, the first five are adapted from Sisney:

• **The strategy changes, but the structure does not.** Form should follow function. Every time we change strategy, we need to consider if the organisational structure is effective.

• **Functions focused on effectiveness report to functions focused on efficiency.** Efficiency always overpowers effectiveness, so it is important that leaders do not put effectiveness functions (sales, strategy) under efficiency functions (administration, compliance).

• **Functions focused on long-range development report to functions focused on short-range results.** Today's urgent always overpowers tomorrow's important, so it's vital, for instance, not to put R&D under operations.

• **The need for autonomy is not balanced with the need for control.** Organisations have a natural tension between playing to win versus operating in a way that they do not lose. The older or the larger the organisation, the more this tension is felt. While organisations need to exercise certain controls to protect themselves, the autonomy to meet customer needs should always take precedence in the structure.

• **The functions are right and well placed, but the wrong people are in them.** Core to a leader's craft is the ability to find people who are the right fit for the role, the organisation, and the phase the organisation is in. This comes back to understanding people (See Principle 1: Understand People).

• **A flat organisational structure instead of a flat power structure.** Often the temptation is to create a flat organisational structure to improve information flows and decision-making. The optimum span of control for leaders is less than nine direct reports.

Rather than flattening the organisational structure organisations need to flatten what is called their 'power distance index' by encouraging autonomy and a culture of innovation and the ability to speak up.

• **No unity of executive control.** From unity of leadership and control comes unity of effort. Organisations without clear lines of accountability or worse, duplicate lines of accountability suffer dissonance and sub-optimal outcomes.

Considering the concepts above, we can revisit how we design our organisations to enable high-performance. Figure 15 below compares the traditional hierarchical alignment with a performance alignment. By pivoting a traditional structure diagram 90° to the left and placing it on two axes, (Y-axis: effective – efficient; X-axis: strategic outcomes – field actions) we have the framework to align our organisational functions to achieve Sisney's three principles of organisational physics (right functions, in the right place, with the right authority).

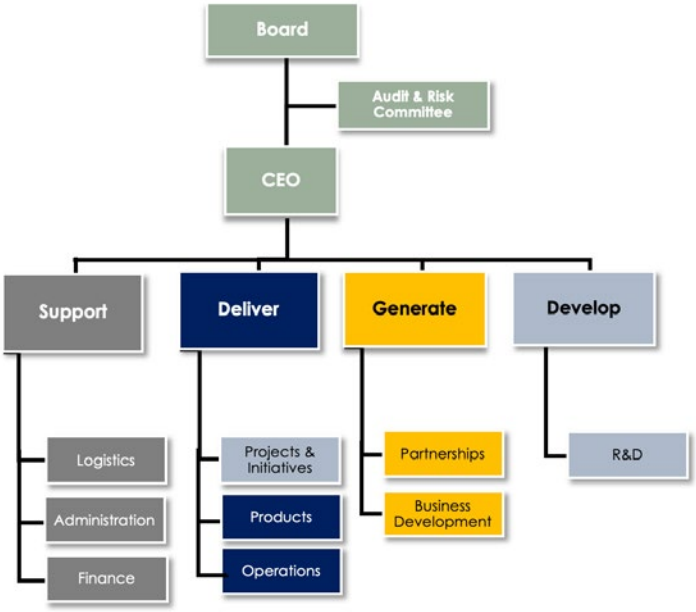
Hierarchical organisations are arranged by rank, whereas performance organisations are arranged by functional focus. In the exemplar on the right, it is clear what roles and functions different parts of the organisation play. For instance, the Audit and Risk committee operates at the strategic level and is focused on ensuring the organisation does things right (efficiency). It is also possible to see that the CEO is primarily focused on strategic effectiveness, but also has responsibilities for the operational delivery of strategy. The field level is not shown on the bottom hierarchical rung, but as the frontline of the organisation. This might seem a small thing, but it sends a clear message—about the value placed on those delivering on the organisation's promise and the customers they serve.

105 Hocken, J., (2019), The Lean Dairy Farm: Eliminate Waste, Save Time, Cut Costs – Creating a More Productive, Profitable and Higher Quality Farm, Wiley.

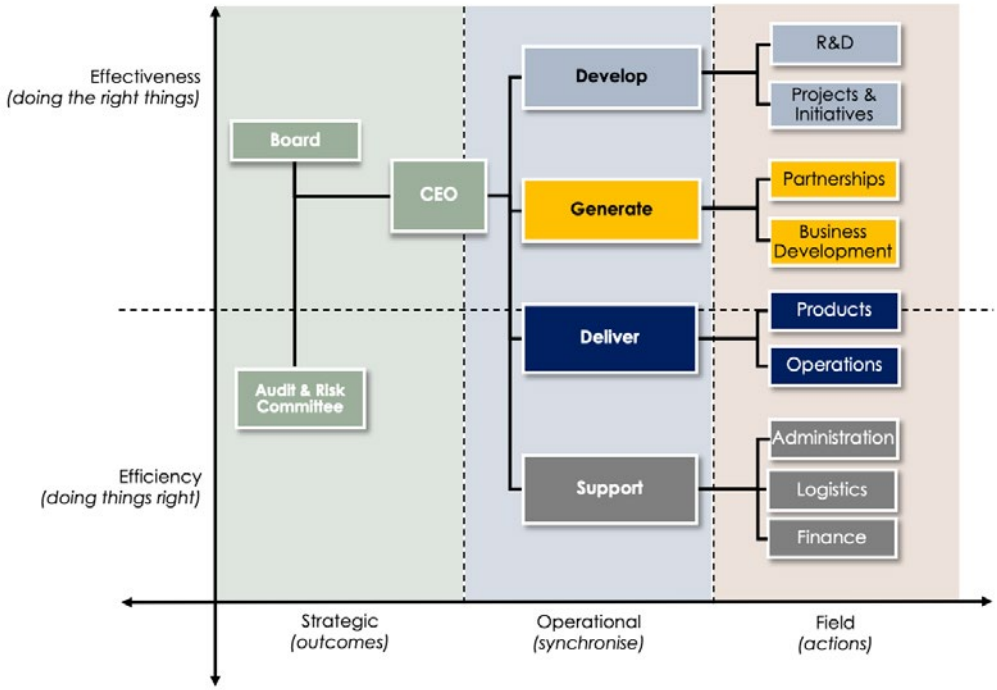
Figure 15:

Aligning Organisational Structures for Performance

Traditional Structure (hierarchical alignment)



Revised Structure (aligned for performance)



Summary

In summary, when building high-performance teams:

• leaders build the teamwork, define the team culture, and ignite entrepreneurial spirit.

• teams of less than 10 people, work together cohesively, with high levels of trust, clear lines of communication, high levels of coordination, and a positive working atmosphere.

• Good systems and structures underpin high-performing teams and businesses.

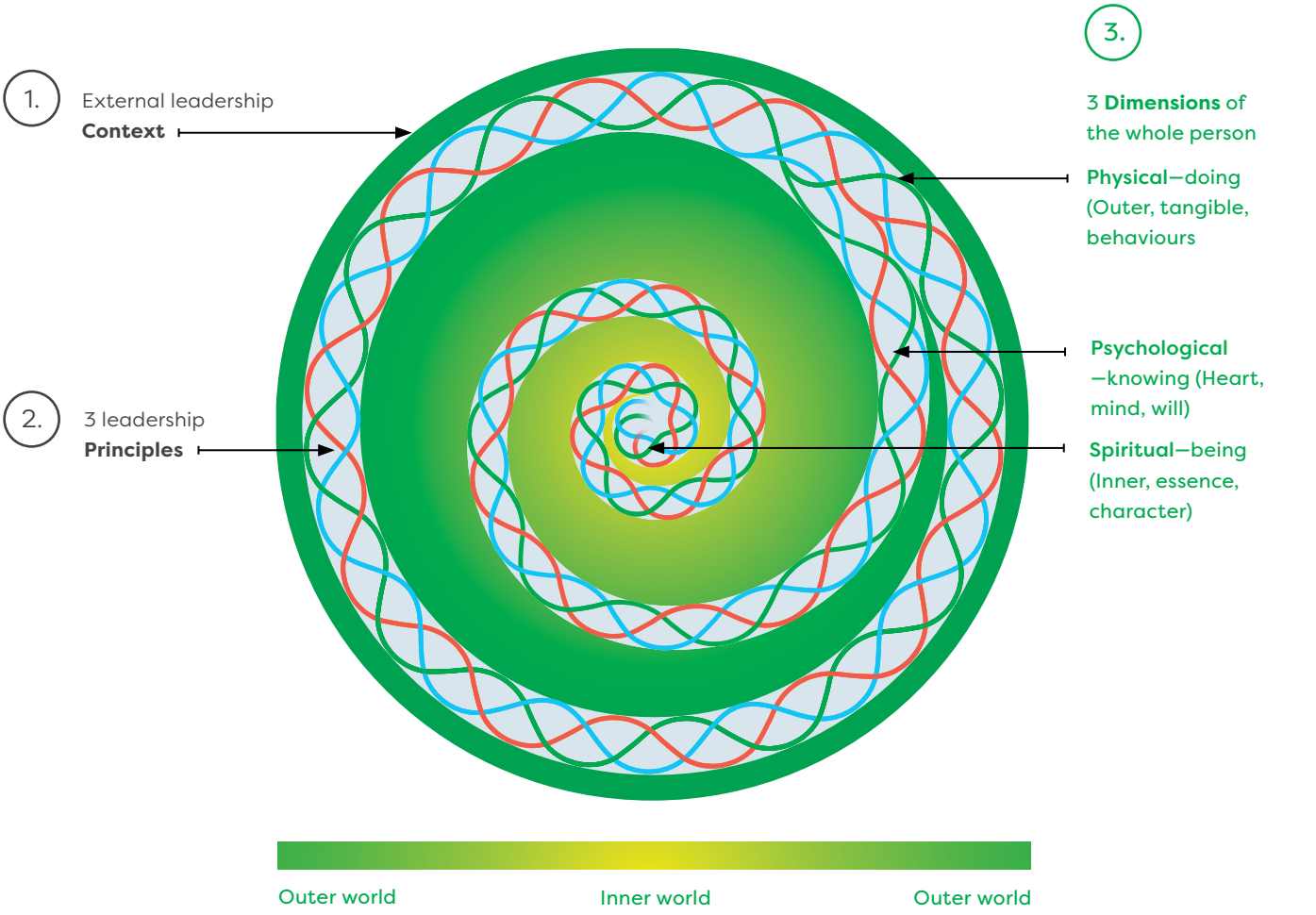
CHAPTER 13—ELEMENT THREE: DIMENSIONS

To recap, the Principles-centred Leadership Model has three elements (**context, principles,** and **dimensions**). Just as individual strands of muka are stronger when woven together, the power of the model is the combination of each distinct element combined with the others. So far, we have covered the sector's **context:** its significance to Aotearoa New Zealand, the enterprising DNA that energises it, and the four facets that ground people within it. We have explored the sector's three leadership **principles:** understand people, service and accountability, and build teams.

Going deeper

We now turn to the three **dimensions** that make up every person (point three on the model), to gain a deeper insight into how we can truly lead in a rapidly changing world that requires us to rethink our leadership practices. Importantly, the synthesis of all three elements in the model is how interviewees, survey respondents, and focus group participants from our sector said they wanted to lead and be led.

Figure 16: *Principles-centred leadership model*



Three dimensions of a person

People are at the heart of a leader's craft. Most cultures regardless of academic, social, and historical tradition, believe that people have three dimensions: physical, psychological, and spiritual:

• Our physical dimension is the tangible and behavioural aspects of our person. It is what the ancient Greeks referred to as *soma* and what Māori refer to as Te Tinana (the body). We primarily interact with the physical world through this dimension.

• Our psychological dimension relates to our humanity. It is the centre for our thoughts, feelings, and motivations. It is what the ancient Greeks referred to as our *psyche* (hence 'psychology', the study of the mind) and is what Māori refer to as Te Hinengaroa. Our psychological dimension is our interface with, and where we make meaning of, the physical outer world and the spiritual inner world.

• Our spiritual dimension is the deepest part of the person. It connects to the intangible and where we draw our creative energy from—our vital spark. It is what the ancient Greeks referred to as our *pneuma,* which literally means 'breath.' The Germans think of it as 'geist'—a sense of our intangible essence and collective spirit. Māori refer to this dimension as Te Wairua. There are two aspects to the concept of wairua: wai (water) and rua (two), which refers to the way spiritual and physical energy forces complement each other.

In a Te Ao Māori context, every act has implications for the spiritual and physical dimensions.

Physical dimension (Te Tinana)
The physical dimension is where a leader's inner world intersects with the outer world. We apply our leadership practice in the physical dimension through our behaviours and leadership actions, such as physical work and communicating. The physical dimension is what those we seek to lead generally see and understand about us. It's also a vital space for leadership practice because, as we highlighted in chapter 3, leading is a verb and has no utility if its purpose and tasks are not achieved.

If the physical dimension is over-used, leadership can become transactional. In the literature, transactional leadership is a managerial style where leaders use the power of their position to transact rewards, punishments, and information as a means of influencing the behaviours of their followers'. It was a dominant style in the Industrial Age when people were seen as 'human resources'. Sadly, it still has a strong echo in the sector, which may be one of the reasons we struggle to attract talent in the numbers we need. Society has moved on from the tough, emotionally illiterate managerial style of leadership, which is all about the task and nothing about the person.

Leaders who only operate from their physical dimension are not able to lead in their truest form. They may well provide acceptable leadership, focused heavily on the *'What'* and *'How,'* but ignoring the deeper dimensions means they will not be able to truly move the people they lead. Or worse, they will move them in tone-deaf ways. As brain scientist, Dr Jill Bolte Taylor says, people are not thinking beings who sometimes feel, we are feeling beings who sometimes think. To truly lead well, we need to go deeper, to the messy 'human-stuff' that is below the surface.

Psychological dimension (Te Hinengaroa)
Moving inwards from our physical dimension is our psychological dimension. Leading from our psychological dimension multiplies our ability to lead physically, because it unlocks the connection. Transformational leadership is currently the most widely referenced leadership model in the world.

Originated by James MacGregor Burns (who also codified transactional leadership), transformational leadership recognises that there is more to leading and leadership than just treating people like machines. In many ways, its development was a response to the Information Age, when mass education meant workers expected to be treated with equality. Successful leaders were now those who could tap into people's humanity.

Burns said that leaders need to do four things: inspire, intellectually stimulate, role model ideals, and actually 'see' people.[106] This was revolutionary stuff. Good leadership was now based on a leader's ability to exercise personal power, not their positional power. Leaders were encouraged to inspire and influence people through their fitness for the role (expert power) and through their ability to generate and hold the respect of their followers (referent power). There is a lot to like about transformational leadership theory. Its use has significantly lifted outcomes for people and organisations.

Leading from the psychological dimension elevates the need for leaders to connect with their own humanity and the humanity of those they lead. In this dimension, leaders move people by inspiring them at a hearts and minds level. They address *'Why'* questions and powerfully engage their team by providing meaning and purpose to the physical actions of leading (discussed above in the physical dimension). In accessing their own psyche, leaders can lead more intuitively.

Spiritual dimension (Te Wairua)
The third, and inner-most dimension is our spiritual dimension.[107] The spiritual dimension is common to most cultures and traditions. Of specific relevance to Aotearoa New Zealand, the spiritual sense of kinship to all living things is central to Te Ao Māori.[108]

By contrast, the Age of Reason and the Scientific Revolution meant Western societies (and some Eastern societies) relegated spirituality to the side as we attempted to understand, categorise, and tame nature.

Ironically, in an age of artificial intelligence where smart machines and algorithms are beginning to think for themselves, and where people have growing choices over where they work and who they work with, we can no longer simply appeal to people's psyche and physically treat them well (although we should do both those things). We also need to reclaim our sense of the infinite and lead with a resonance that can only be found by looking at who we are.

For thousands of years, societies have continually returned to the idea that deep within each person is a spiritual core. It is where we connect with our wairua, the very essence and character of our life. It is from this centre that a leader's mauri (breath of life) or life force, energy, uniqueness, intrinsic worth and ability to connect with the infinite resides. Different cultures and traditions have different names for this dimension. In Hindu it is known as 'prana', in Chinese it is 'chi', in Hebrew this breath of life is 'ruwach'. Other terms that may resonate include conscience, inner voice, a sense of deep knowing, belief, or faith. It is the part of us that defies rational explanation, and yet we can sense it, if we pause to listen and just *'be'.*

106 Burns, J., (1978), Leadership, Harper and Row.
107 Spirituality is often associated with religion and is deeply personal. This research doesn't promote any particular view of the spiritual dimension. All we do here is acknowledge it and seek to sketch some of its attributes and their relevance to leadership within the sector.
108 Durie, M., (2003), Ngā Kāhui Pou: Launching Māori Futures, Huia Publishers, p. 56.
https://www.google.co.nz/books/edition/_/Hi9dZ157Cg8C?hl=en

Bringing it all together

We lead best when we operate in all three dimensions and seek alignment between our innermost world (being), our humanity (knowing) and our outer world (doing). The outer world, beyond the person, is the first element of the principles-centred leadership model. To recap, it relates to waiora as well as our relationship with whānau and the specific **context** of leading in the sector. When we combine and align all three parts of ourselves, we are leading with our *whole* person. Truly leading well can occur when we are deeply connected to *'who'* we are and relate to others in a way that shows we understand *'who'* they are (see Chapter 9 Principle 1.2—Know Others and the section on mana under Principle 2: Service and accountability). At this level leaders are radiating energy rather than exerting power.

Energy

Energy is the wellspring of true leadership. When we are truly leading the alignment of our whole self with meaningful purpose energises us and others are drawn to it. Energy is different from power. Power is the rate at which energy is transferred. In a leadership context power can be transferred through a leaders position or role (transactional leadership) or through personal power (transformational leadership). Finding what energises us and what feels true, is leadership's X-factor. This is when the magic happens. It's when we find flow (see the section on flow in Chapter 12—High-performing teams).

As we consider what energises us, we need to face ourselves. We need to be radically honest about what our values, gifts, and dreams say about us. We must ask the hard questions, including about those parts of how we think, feel and act that are not currently in alignment. Next, we must progressively and embark on the rejuvenating work of setting new boundaries and new horizons.

Through this process we find a resonance—that ultimately brings with it self-control, peace, hope, and joy. When we, as leaders, operate in alignment with our core, we create authenticity and generate trust. History's greatest leaders were deeply grounded in who they were and what they stood for. The path to this alignment and truly leading well is a hard one, and no leader arrives at this place of honesty and resonance without walking through hardship.

Summary

In summary, the truest form of leadership for each individual leader is deeply and uniquely personal and yet collectively transformative. So, in the end, we start where we began. Leadership is a mystifying phenomenon not least because it is full of paradoxes. For instance: if you wish to influence others, then know yourself; if you wish to lead, then serve; if you want power, generate energy, and then spread it.

Leaders who are brave enough to truly understand themselves, be true to themselves, and lead from this dimension have a genuine quality to them that is not otherwise possible. To quote from the first principle, "To know yourself is hard work, and it takes real humility to find the truth." If leaders are willing to see the same in others, and align *who* they are with *why, what,* and *how* they lead, they are leading in their truest form. These thoughts are not new or even revolutionary. Elements one and three of the principles-centred leadership model were elegantly summed up by the great Tā Āpirana Ngata in 1949 when he wrote:

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.

PART 3. HOW WE GROW LEADERSHIP

Photo credit: Dan 'Maxy' Max

CHAPTER 14—LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM

If you've come this far, then perhaps you might be willing to go a little further.

This research is a response to a threefold challenge that came from within the sector:

• Our need to move past a leadership culture that worked in the past but is no longer optimised for our fast-changing world.

• A need to move beyond our ad hoc way of developing leadership to something more systemised. To do this requires an approach that is versatile enough to encompass the scale and breadth of the sector yet practical enough to ensure we can continue to underpin the nation's prosperity.

• The need to embrace our rich bicultural foundations while also being relevant to our modern multicultural context. To do this any new leadership system needs to weave together the holistic concepts core to the belonging-focused cultures of Māori and Pacific peoples and the autonomy-focused rationality of modern Western cultures.

In short, the sector asked for a leadership development ecosystem that all people can see themselves in and that produces a continual flow of leaders capable of stepping into increasingly impactful leadership roles. As one farming leader put it, "We need to grow our own hoggets."

So far, we've laid the foundations of a unified concept for what we as a sector mean by 'leadership', and what we want from our leaders. The stories throughout this research show the concepts are alive and well in pockets across the sector. The challenge now is to make a sector-wide step change.

To get somewhere, it really helps to have a map. The following chapter sets out the foundations of a leadership development ecosystem, with three core components:

• progression pathways

• leadership landscape

• capability development framework.

PROGRESSION PATHWAYS

As highlighted in Chapter 5—Developing a culture of high-performance leadership, the sector needs a leadership progression model that allows people the freedom to choose their own path, anywhere along and between two broad pathways: generalist and specialist. Generalist progression leads to highly visible roles at the apex of organisations. Equally vital to the progress of the sector are our specialists who seek deep expertise. Their pathway is not defined by the size of the team or their organisational 'rank', but by the quality and impact of their expertise. Figure 17 depicts the broad pathways, with generalist progression on the Y-axis, and specialist progression on the horizontal, X-axis.

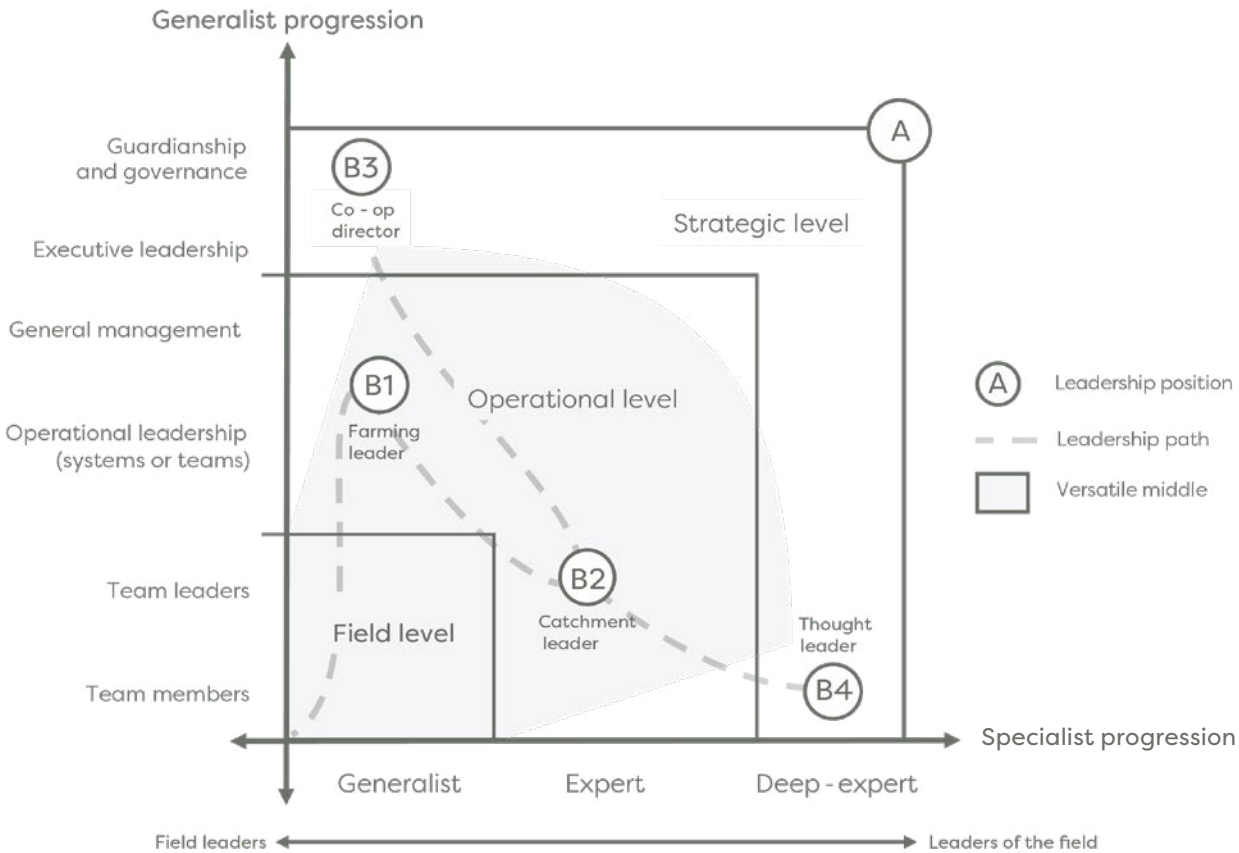
Generalist progression includes six generic 'ranks', which sit within three broad levels of leadership: 'field' leadership, 'operational' leadership, and 'strategic' leadership. The strategic apex (top of the Y-axis) is commonly thought to be governance roles carried out by Directors and Trustees. Less considered is guardianship. Guardianship roles are normally a step-removed from governance and executive leadership. They are bestowed only sparingly and to people of mana who personify the virtue and values of the group or entity from which the honour is bestowed. Examples include respected kaumatua (elders) and organisational patrons. At the apex of the executive level, are CEOs and entrepreneur-business owners.

Specialist progression also advances through the same three levels (field, operational and strategic). Someone pursuing specialist progression might be operating in a small team or by themselves, but leading cutting-edge innovation on the global or local stage. Or they might be the guardians of traditional knowledge systems, such as tohunga and tōhuka (experts). At the far right of the X-axis are deep experts who generate strategic impact.

There is no proforma career model in the sector; most people will chart their own path. Few people strictly follow one axis of progression, and even less people move to the top of that axis. It is also rare for someone to be a strategic level leader on both the generalist and specialist axes (point A on the model). Most people sit somewhere in the 'versatile' middle (shown in grey). As the model illustrates at points B1 – B4, people may also have multiple leadership roles in the different spheres of their life. For example, one person may be an operational farming leader in their 'day job' (B1), contributing their specialist expertise at a field-level in their community catchment group (B2), and holding a strategic position as a Director on a Cooperative Board (B3), as well as contributing thought leadership to strategically impact the sector via their published work (B4).

Figure 17:

Food and Fibre Leadership Pathways



Over the course of their leadership journeys, leaders need to adapt their core leadership behaviours to an increasingly complex and consequential environment.

Levels of leadership

Research has identified six generic leadership ranks relevant to the sector that relate to increasingly responsible positions.[109] The six generic ranks, sit within three broad levels of leadership: 'field', 'operational', and 'strategic'. Participants in our research identified development gaps at every level. This is consistent with Zenger and Folkman's international research of 17,000 leaders, which showed most supervisors operate in leadership roles for over a decade before getting trained in leadership.[110]

To best serve our people, enterprises, and sector we need to provide leaders with opportunities to develop at each of the six key transition points in their leader journey. Figure 18 is an illustrative framework of the sector's leadership levels, generic ranks, and development requirements.

109 **The State of Leadership Development in New Zealand's Food and Fibre Sector. (February 2023)**, New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust, p. 22. **https://ruralleaders.co.nz/state-of-leadership-development/**

110 Spirituality is often associated with religion and is deeply personal. This research doesn't promote any particular view of the spiritual dimension. All we do here is acknowledge it and seek to sketch some of its attributes and their relevance to leadership within the sector.

Figure 18:

Leadership levels, ranks, and development requirements

Level	Rank	Development	Representative characteristics	Context
1. Field	Team Member	Lead self	• Lead self • Self-starter	**Team and task context** • Tactical horizon • 180° Influence (up and across) • Follows, learns, and contributes
	Team Leader	Team Leaders' course	• Stock manager • Frontline Supervisor • First mate	**Functional context** • Direct leadership of a nuclear team • 360° Influence (up, across, down) • Operational horizon • Understudies' operations leader level • Works constructively with other team leaders and external networks (e.g. contractors)
2. Operational	Operational Leader	Operational Leaders' course	• Operations officer • Forest manager • Orchard manager • Fishing captain	**Value chain and operating system context** • 360° Influence • Operations horizon • Understudies GM level • Accountable for influencing team leaders and external stakeholders
	General Management	Emerging strategic leaders programme (e.g. Kellogg)	• Divisional leader • Emerging strategic leader • Owner	**Enterprise and pan-sector context** • Strategic horizon • 360° Influence and supports governance • Understudies Executive level
3. Strategic	Executive leader	Enterprise Leader programme	• C-Suite executive • Enterprise owner	**External context (Pan-sector, New Zealand Inc., international)** • Strategic horizon • 360° Influence (including governance and external stakeholders) • Accountable for enterprise success and stewardship of people and resources
	Director / Trustee	Governance programme	• Decision making • Fiduciary duties • Strategy • Audit and risk	**External context** • Strategic horizon • 360° Influence (without encroaching into the management sphere) • Accountable for major decisions (including strategy, risk, solvency and ESG[111]). Accountable to shareholders

Developing domain expertise

Research highlighted that we also need to develop leadership expertise in multiple domains. As people transition between leadership levels, they often move into different domains of leadership also, for instance moving from an advocacy role into an executive role. While the nature of leading and leadership remains the same, each of these roles have different characteristics, and this can catch out an under-prepared leader.

Each domain has a core leadership challenge that differentiates it from the others. For instance:

• Leading governance is about prudent decision-making.

• Entrepreneurial leadership is about purposeful risk-taking.[112]

• Executive leadership requires the leader to be fully accountable for the results of their organisation and the safety and wellness of the people within it.

• Community leadership requires unique skills to motivate and focus volunteers.

• Leading advocacy is about the leader listening well, representing others, and challenging constructively.

Individual and collective development

Interviewees said that there is a "need for individual leader development as well as team development (teams of leaders)."[113]

• **Individual development.** Where it does occur, leadership development in our sector has focused mainly on individual development. This has significant benefit to the individual in developing their personal leadership capabilities and confidence. Individual development programmes also have the advantage of connecting individuals with a peer group outside their immediate workplace or industry. The 2023 Mackenzie Study found that developing a high-trust cohort that can be a sounding board and a network has accelerated many careers across the sector.[114] Individual programmes also have a role in promoting leadership capability within underrepresented communities (often women, indigenous, and migrant communities) so they can have greater influence in the sector. One drawback of the individual development approach is when individual leaders are developed and then return to poor organisational environments. In this case, they are less likely to thrive and more likely to leave.

• **Team development.** A new area for focus is collective leader development in existing teams. Most of our work is done in teams, be they large or small, centralised, distributed, or networked. Collective development of existing teams has the real potential to boost performance across the sector. Team development was addressed in Chapters 11 and 12.

Development methods

Not all development comes from formal courses or programmes. The concepts in the framework below can be developed in multiple ways. The 70:20:10 rule provides a useful rule of thumb for developing talent:

• 70 percent should be self-development (individual study and practice)

• 20 percent should be guided development (mentoring and coaching in the workplace)

• 10 percent should be structured development (accredited leadership programmes)

The power of the 70:20:10 model is multiplied when leadership programmes are accessed either just before, or soon after a person transitions to a new leadership role or 'rank'. This is because those on the course bring with them (and share) their experiences, and they leave with new ways of understanding what they are about to experience plus a peer group to help them succeed in their new leadership role.

Photo credit: Mark Coote

111 ESG is a framework that helps stakeholders, including customers and investors, to understand how an organisation is embracing environmental, social and governance factors (principles and standards).
112 **Lumpkin, G.T. and Dess, G.G. (1996),** Clarifying the Entrepreneurial Orientation Construct and Linking It to Performance. Academy of Management Review, 21, 135-172. **https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1996.9602161568**
113 **The State of Leadership Development in New Zealand's Food and Fibre Sector. (February 2023),** New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust, p.22
114 **Berg N., et al., (2023).**

The capability framework below is a guiding checklist for how you might assess your current leadership capability, your areas of focus for growth, and what you might do to achieve progression or depth. It is not a 'tick-box' exercise, because leadership is not a 'tick-box' practice.

Who is the framework for?

Individuals

The capability framework can support your personal discovery. You can use it to conduct an honest assessment of where you are at, and where you want to be. This can help you in two ways—firstly to reflect on your horizons and aspirations, and then the possibilities you can achieve by leading from all three dimensions. At a more practical level, it's about asking 'What's next?' The learning outcomes associated with each principle, and the progressive leadership dimensions of the framework, can help you identify the right next step and learning opportunity for yourself.

Leaders and teams

The capability framework can support individual and collective learning and development programmes and discussions. In this context, we're reflecting on the team and where it wants or needs to be, or thinking about how we can grow our people well.

Educators and trainers

Our research found that the sector is calling for a coherent and shared approach to leadership development. Therefore, we hope this framework will be useful as a starting point for leadership trainers and practitioners to locate and frame their teaching and practice using the principles-based model. If you're teaching leadership now, which learning outcomes are you covering well? Can you embed some of these progressions into your current practice, or have you got a gap or something you want to add?

The education system

Our research revealed that, while a myriad of leadership courses are on offer, the formal (NZQA) system currently offers few options for standards or qualifications on the New Zealand qualifications framework, or that could be usefully 'reverse engineered' to be fit-for purpose for the kind of principles-centred leadership development we are talking about. The good news is that this situation should change in coming years: we know that our Workforce Development Councils are designing new skill standards, micro-credentials, and skills frameworks designed to provide new and future-proofed pathways for the Food and Fibre sector (and others). We have been encouraged by our conversations and their thinking, so we humbly offer up this attempt as an input for consideration, and heartily encourage its future development and adoption. Ultimately, we would like to see the formal NZQA system become involved, and that this direction will spark new developments, and new, well supported, and trusted credentials that allow our leaders to be identified, to emerge, and to truly lead well.

How to use the framework

Great leadership can be difficult to measure, but when present, has an incredible impact. That also means if you're starting out, or if you're struggling, things can look daunting. Sometimes educators forget that talking about 'best practice' can scare more than inspire.

In the real world, we all begin at the beginning, and today is always a starting point. Think *'That could be me.'* Breaking our leadership model into a framework is about simplifying this huge topic into something meaningful, manageable, and practical.

Priorities and learning needs vary. You might be looking to deepen your leadership in the role you have now or understand what the pathways are in terms of leadership in the Food and Fibre sector.

Consider this a chance to build your own leadership, filling the gaps the way you want to fill them, with an emphasis that makes sense for you right now. These next few pages will help you identify a few practical next-steps in an action plan for you, your team, or your organisation—and the sector and the people it serves. In addition, the framework offers suggestions for further reading that will support your action plan.

Framework

The following pages provide the framework itself. The framework is aimed to encapsulate and distil capabilities and behaviours in terms of levels and learning outcomes. It's arranged across sixteen main learning outcomes, which come from the three principles, and sub-principles, discussed in chapters 8-11.

1. Understand people

1.1 Know self

1.2 Know others

1.3 Build relationships

2. Service and accountability

2.1 Service

2.2 Accountability

3. Build teams

3.1 Belonging

3.2 Autonomy

3.3 Purpose

As you progress through each characteristic, give thought as to where you place yourself between leading from the physical dimension, through to leading in alignment from all three dimensions (physical, psychological, and spiritual). Further, think about what it means to live each characteristic, and times where you've seen those around you truly leading well in your own work and life, where someone has been in alignment from all three dimensions.

Understand People	Outcome	Physical	Physical and Psychological	Physical and Psychological and Spiritual
1.1 Know self	Leaders understand their own drivers and values	Articulates their motivations	Knows their learning style, thinking style, personality style (traits), and values	Proactively applies their knowledge for ongoing personal growth aligned to their values
	Leaders are in tune with their feelings	Identifies and manages their emotions	Understands their feelings and interpret their emotional causes	Can synthesise their feelings with appropriate responses
	Leaders understand their reputation	Understands that the way others see them may differ from the way they see themselves. Is open to feedback	Understands how their behaviour influences and impacts others. Practices self-reflection, addresses biases and blind spots	Are strategically self-aware. Others trust their authenticity because their identity and reputation are aligned. Actively seeks feedback and makes it safe for others to offer honest observations
	Leaders are curious	Demonstrates adaptability	Demonstrates a learning and growth mindset. Are open to different perspectives. Extrapolates knowledge and applies it innovatively	Cultivates a culture of curiosity and innovation
	Leaders are resilient	Regulates behaviour and recover from setbacks	Identifies growth and learning opportunities as a result of overcoming challenges	Creates a resilient culture by owning and sharing learnings from setbacks. Has self-efficacy
Further reading	Victor E Frankl *Man's Search for Meaning* Brené Brown *Braving the Wilderness* Carol Dweck Mindset: *The New Psychology of Success* Angela Duckworth Grit: *The Power of Passion and Perseverance*			

Understand People	Outcome	Physical	Physical and Psychological	Physical and Psychological and Spiritual
1.2 Know others	Leaders know and understand others	Understands others' skills, strengths, and weaknesses	Demonstrates understanding of others' motivations and drivers	Demonstrates belief in others and unleashes the latent potential in others
	Leaders have empathy	Shows cognitive empathy. Is aware of others' perspectives	Shows emotional empathy. In tune with others' feelings	Demonstrates compassionate empathy. Takes an interest in others wellbeing and treats them fairly
Further reading	Simon Sinek *Leaders Eat Last* Daniel Goleman *Emotional Intelligence* Dale Carnegie *How to Win Friends and Influence People*			
1.3 Build relationships	Leaders make one-to-one connections	Communicates to establish understanding	Makes meaningful connections and builds trust and commitment	Exerts energy that creates peak experiences, flow, and deep bonds
	Leaders build trust	Shows sufficient benevolence, integrity, competence, and predictability for the team to work productivity	Influences, coaches, and guides their team members to demonstrate benevolence, integrity, competence, and predictability; shows vulnerability to further build trust	The team feel comfortable to be radically candid with each other, and create a high-trust environment
Further reading	Melanie Katzman *Connect First* Brené Brown *The Power of Vulnerability* Richard E. Boyatzis, Annie McKee *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope and Compassion*			

Service and accountability	Outcome	Physical	Physical and Psychological	Physical and Psychological and Spiritual
2.1 Service	Leaders serve something greater than themselves	Puts purpose first. (Service before self)	Inspires and motivates others by crafting and communicating a compelling vision for the future. Fosters independent thinking	Inspires others, by connects them with values and purpose, encourages their creativity. (Purpose led)
	Deal with Status and power	Treats people fairly and ensures they are treated consistently (Firm, fair and friendly)	Leads with humility empathy, and integrity. Shares power, but remains accountable	Is mana-enhancing, listens and observes, considers, and responds to build mana and wairua
	Leaders invest in people's growth	Enables access to development opportunities (job-level development)	Seeks out and is engaged in growth (career-level development)	Unleashes full capability and potential (whole person development)
Further reading	Robert Greenleaf *The Power of Servant Leadership* The Arbinger Institute *Leadership and Self-deception* Chellie Spiller, Hotutoa Barclay-Kerr, John Panoho *Wayfinding Leadership: Groundbreaking Wisdom for Developing Leaders* Daniel Pink *Drive the Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* Peter Senge *The Fifth Discipline*			

Service and accountability	Outcome	Physical	Physical and Psychological	Physical and Psychological and Spiritual
2.2 Accountability	Leaders make effective decisions	Finds and analyses information; makes sound decisions	Uses the power of the team to inform timely and effective decisions. Extrapolates and critically analyses information from multiple sources. Has the courage to make decisions in uncertainty	Sees the need for decision in advance, generates foresight and has the courage to act; decision-making creates options and wider impact
	Leaders delegate authority	Delegates tasks and the authority to achieve tasks	Empowers competent people closest to the task	Provides safe space for the team to achieve objectives. Takes accountability for failures
	Leaders hold people to account	Holds themselves and others accountable	Develops a climate of self-discipline, where disciplined thinking, and actions reduces the need for unnecessary rules and regulations	Creates a full-ownership culture, in which the leader and the team own successes and failures equally
Further reading	Daniel Levitin *The Organized Mind* Steven Johnson: *Farsighted: How We Make the Decisions that Matter the Most* Daniel Kahneman *Thinking Fast and Slow* Willink and Babin: *Extreme Ownership* Blanchard, Burrows: *The One Minute Manager*			

Build teams	Outcome	Physical	Physical and Psychological	Physical and Psychological and Spiritual
3.1 Belonging	Leaders create an environment where all team members feel safe to be their full and authentic selves	Values and includes diverse perspectives	Proactively seeks to understand any barriers to inclusion for each team member; role models authenticity	Proactively removes barriers and structures that hinder a sense of belonging, so the leader and the team members operate fully authentically
	Leaders role model belonging	Creates teamwork by ensuring people with diverse perspectives and backgrounds feel included	Builds cultural competence including Māori cultural processes (e.g. pepeha, mihi) and respects different cultural backgrounds within the team, blending them into a cohesive unit, where each person is valued for who they are	Creates a resonant culture where others feel connected to a shared purpose and values and respect for those who have gone before
Further reading	Daniel Coyle *The Culture Code* Owen Eastwood *Belonging: The ancient code of togetherness* Hinemoa Elder *Aroha: Māori Wisdom for a Contented Life Lived in Harmony With Our Planet*			

Build teams	Outcome	Physical	Physical and Psychological	Physical and Psychological and Spiritual
3.2 Autonomy	Leaders create an environment where team members have the autonomy to determine how best to conduct their task	Clearly articulates the outcome required and delegates effectively	Applies mission leadership principles, builds team capability	Unleashes the potential in others
	Leaders create an environment where team members have autonomy over their timing and place of work	Clearly articulates the outcome required, including quality and timeframes	Gives team members the opportunity to propose when and where they will complete the outcome	Team members have full autonomy over their schedule, aligned with team and task requirements
Further reading	Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith: *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization* General Stanley McCrystal *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World* Patrick Lencioni *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* Oliver Burkeman *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals*			

Build teams	Outcome	Physical	Physical and Psychological	Physical and Psychological and Spiritual
3.3 Purpose	Leaders connect the team to an organisational purpose	Articulates a clear purpose	Creates team alignment between personal and organisational purpose	Engenders belief in a purpose
	Leaders energise the team	Creates an environment that boosts physical energy, including physical wellness and creates a healthy team environment	Ignites enthusiasm and emotional energy by maintaining an optimistic mindset, celebrating team achievements, and fostering collaboration	Leads from within (who they are) in a way that is compelling and intrinsic and creates flow
Further reading	Simon Sinek, David Mead, Peter Docker *Find Your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team* Aaron Dignan *Brave New Work* Brené Brown *Dare to Lead*			

CONCLUSION

As significant as the sector is for Aotearoa New Zealand, it is also small and the relationships in it are often tightly woven. Consequently, we all lead in small and large ways every day. At its heart, to lead is simply the communication of ideas, feelings, or example-setting behaviours that others see the value of and then adopt or adapt.

Leadership, is a broader concept that, embodies leading as well as the explicit and implicit responsibilities and functions of a leader's role. Specifically, rangatira mahi, the work of those in leadership, is to bring groups of people together and weave them into teams—ideally, high-performing teams.

Leadership involves taking accountability for the behaviours and performance of the team while having the courage to share responsibility and authority with them. When this occurs, the individual potential of the team members and the collective potential of the team are unleashed.

At a sector level, this research contributes to the work by the Food and Fibre Centre for Vocational Excellence and the New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust, to grow a leadership development ecosystem that brings research, smart design, and systems thinking to our way of developing leaders for our country. For the sector to thrive in the face of the challenges and opportunities before it, we need a continual flow of leaders who are equipped for the leadership roles they will step through on their leadership journeys. Our leaders also need to be equipped for the weight of that responsibility and expectations we will place on them as they progress. A weight that will invariably be lighter than the one they place on themselves.

The world has an abundance of leadership literature, so some may ask why we need more. If the sector is to adapt to the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world it is facing, we need a sense of ourselves and we need to know how we want to lead and be led. Woven through the pages of this research are over 500 voices from the sector who have told their stories about who they are, and how they wish to lead and be led.

The principles-centred model offered in the pages above is a leadership approach from the sector and for the sector. We hope it will be tested, validated, and over time improved. After all, in the words of James MacGregor Burns, leadership remains one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on Earth. There is always more to learn.

A final word. We wish you well on your journey: as you deepen your understanding of people (starting with you), as you take the hard road of service and accountability, and as you build teams unleashing the potential of each person, the enterprises you serve, and ultimately, the ability of the sector to prosper.

The path towards truly leading in alignment is not easy. You will earn scars on the way. Some may hold regrets for possibilities missed; some may be reflections in the mirror that you hold up to yourself; and some may be echoes of old injustices that are still a little sore. If you learn from them and hold them loosely, they will enrich your leadership capability. A leader with no scars has never stood for something, never stood for someone, never pushed the bounds of convention. They may have managed, and managed well, but they have never truly led. Worn well, the scars of leadership are marks of courage. Others have taken this road. May their stories and examples (including their mistakes), give you courage on your own leadership journey.

Totou toa, he toa Rangatira (Our courage is one of chiefs, who were our forebears). —whakataukī (Māori proverb)

APPENDICES

A. Bibliography

B. Glossary

C. Acknowledgements

D. Research Methodology

E. Authors, Researchers, Key contact

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GLOSSARY

Field level	The field level of leadership is concerned with the planning and practical conduct of tasks to meet organisational or team objectives.	
Group	A group is not a team; it is a collection of individuals whose outputs rely on the sum of "individual bests". They don't pursue collective outputs that require joint effort. E.g. members of a working group interact primarily to share information and practices that enable them to act within their own sphere of responsibility.	Adapted from Katzenbach and Smith
Hau	Hau is reciprocity. A process of continuous giving and receiving.	Spiller, C. & Stockdale, M. (2012)
High-performing team	A high-performing team achieves superior results. They embody complementary skills, clear and meaningful purpose and clear objectives, clear ways of working, and mutual accountability for the outcomes. They have high levels of trust, clear lines of communication, high levels of coordination, and a positive working atmosphere. High-performance teams are highly cohesive.	Adapted from Katzenbach and Smith
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship, stewardship, or protection of the environment. It is a way of managing the environment based on the Māori world view and includes the concepts of guardianship, stewardship, and protection.	From Charles Russell 'Integration of Rangatira Leadership Principles, 2023)
Kaumātua	Elders in Māori society who are often respected for their wisdom and knowledge.	Charles Russell (2023)
Lead	Verb, an act of influencing or showing the way.	Adapted from the Collins English Dictionary
Leader	Noun, a person who guides, or inspires others.	Adapted from the Collins English Dictionary
Leadership	Noun, the position, function, or attributes of a leader.	Adapted from the Collins English Dictionary
Manaakitanga	A foundational concept in Māori culture referring to authority, power, and influence. It encompasses a broader spectrum than just hierarchical power, integrating the duty to care for, serve, and promote communal well-being. The act of caring, hospitality, and kindness. It's about uplifting the mana (dignity) of others through showing respect, generosity, and care for the community.	Charles Russell (2023)
Mātauranga Māori	Refers to Māori knowledge, wisdom, and understanding—often encompassing the traditional knowledge and cultural practices of the Māori people.	Charles Russell (2023)
Mana	Mana is the measure of a person. It is not what they say about themselves. Rather it is the regard others hold for that person. Thus, mana is conferred by others in recognition of a person's service. It must be earned.	Spiller, C. & Stockdale, M. (2012)
Mauri	Mauri is a life-force. Everything in creation has a mauri, which endows uniqueness of being and intrinsic worth.	Spiller, C. & Stockdale, M. (2012)
Mission leadership	A style of leading that creates freedom for team members to act within the framework of a clear purpose. Having understood the 'why and what', team leaders then work out 'how' they will achieve their team's mission. If the situation changes, they have the flexibility to improvise within the context of the overarching purpose—enabling them to carry out missions with the maximum autonomy and appropriate resources.	
Operational level	The operational level is concerned with the planning and conduct of systems and operations. Operational art is the skilful employment of people and resources to attain strategic goals through the design, organisation, sequencing, and direction of organisational efforts.	Adapted from NZ Defence Doctrine

Rangatira	The field level of leadership is concerned with the planning and practical conduct of tasks to meet organisational or team objectives.	Charles Russell (2023)
Te Ao Māori	The Māori world view, encompassing Māori cultural practices, values, and beliefs.	Charles Russell (2023)
Te Taiao	The natural world	
Team	A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are equally committed and hold themselves mutually accountable for a common purpose, goals and working approach. This is the minimum level that a project, programme or team leader needs to attain to ensure a successful outcome.	Katzenbach and Smith
Tikanga Māori	The customs and traditional values and practices of Māori culture.	Charles Russell (2023)
Transactional leadership	A general pattern of influence based on the provision of various rewards or benefits in exchange for extra effort or improved performance; some times discussed with reference to principles of economic exchange.	Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine
Transform-ational leadership	A general pattern of influence based on shared core values and mutual commitment and trust between the leader and led and intended to effect significant or radical improvement in individual, group, or system capabilities and performance; sometimes discussed in the context of social-exchange theory.	Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine
Strategic level	Strategy is the mechanism organisations use to articulate their vision and create competitive advantage. Strategy integrates what needs to be achieved (ends) with how it will be done (ways) and the resources needed (means) to achieve successful outcomes.	Adapted from UK Defence Doctrine (JDP 0-01)
Wairua	Wairua is the spirit. There are two aspects to wairua: wai (water) and rua (two). The aspects refer to spiritual and physical energy forces that complement each other. Every act has implications for the spiritual and physical dimensions.	Spiller, C. & Stockdale, M. (2012)
Whakapapa	Whakapapa is an ordering principle and a spiritual link between generations. It refers to the layers of genealogy that link people to many generations, past and future.	Spiller, C. & Stockdale, M. (2012)
Whanaunga-tanga	Refers to kinship, a sense of family connection—a relationship through shared experiences and working together—providing people with a sense of belonging.	Charles Russell (2023)

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Any error or misinterpretation of the insights we have been gifted is solely ours.

In that vein, we do not profess to be leadership experts—no one is. Like you, we are on our own personal leadership journeys too. We have our share of failings and failures, but every now and again we see a life positively impacted and, in that moment, all discomfort of the journey seems more than worth it.

To those brave enough to take the leadership path and especially those brave enough to look deeply within themselves and pursue leading in alignment from all three dimensions, yours is a never-ending pilgrimage. The idea of something being never ending may sound daunting, but never has a destination been a place, it has only ever been the road travelled, the people you went with and those who you met on the way. Thank you for meeting us here and we look forward to hearing about your experiences when we next meet further along the path.

Finally, we wish to sincerely acknowledge and thank the Authors and Researchers, Chris Parsons, MNZM, DSD, Dr Ellen Joan Ford and Josh Williams.

Photo credit: Dan 'Maxy' Max

The leadership principles and practice models in the research came from the sector. This report is fundamentally by the sector, for the sector.

Research methods

The data for this report was drawn from over 500 individual responses via three main sources: interviews, focus groups, and a survey. The survey included some quantitative questions, primarily to gather demographic data, but focused more heavily on the free text, qualitative data. In addition, further views were sought, and ideas tested, throughout the development of the report. This report is not a thesis, but academic principles were front of mind and applied as appropriate throughout. This is coupled with a pragmatic and practical lens—to ensure this the report is evidence-based, drawn from theory, scholarly literature, and research from within the sector—and can be applied to have a tangible impact on the sector.

The co-researchers (Chris Parsons and Dr Ellen Joan Ford) used an informal, conversational approach (Moustakas, 1990)[115] during the interviews and focus groups, using semi-structured questions which allowed for a degree of flexibility (Saunders et al., 2009).[116] The questions were open-ended in order to encourage free flow of information. During the interviews and focus groups, each of the co-researchers wrote detailed notes, which were an abbreviated transcript of the session. Immediately after, we compared notes and typically coded the data on the same day.

We used thematic analysis,[117] which is common in qualitative research and provides a way to make sense of data by scrutinising transcripts, survey responses and research notes, line by line, in order to identify common themes (Bazely, 2013; Boyatzis, 1998; Silverman, 2006).[118] This involves a methodical and meticulous approach to repeatedly organising and re-organising data to understand themes and commonalities.

Inductive coding was used to determine the themes, meaning that categories or themes are developed after the data is gathered, as opposed to specifying these categories in advance of the research. We interpreted the data using an iterative approach; developing the themes that emerged throughout the research process. To enhance research rigour, these findings were discussed with a senior academic from Lincoln University to sense-check our coding and thematic analysis, and to unpack the themes.

Sources of data

This research occurred in stages, with the first being interviews. Organisations from the sector were approached during September 2022, to conduct interviews during September–December 2022. Everyone who was approached agreed to be interviewed, which demonstrated the sector's support for this project. Interviews were conducted by the lead researchers for this project, Chris Parsons and Dr Ellen Joan Ford, primarily in-person, with some via video call, and the participants were senior members within their organisations. The two key questions for each interview were (1) what leadership development currently exists, and (2) what is needed for leadership development in the sector. 60 people from 39 organisations were interviewed in 42 interviews. As a result of this data, the first report of the project was produced in February 2023: The State of Leader Development in New Zealand's Food and Fibre Sector (Parsons and Nelson (née Ford), 2023).

The second stage involved focus groups and an online survey, to test and refine the findings of the first round of research and produce a leadership model. This was geared to getting leaders' views. Focus groups were 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. 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.

An online survey was live during the same time the focus groups were being conducted, which attracted 95 responses. Together, both methods of research gained insights from approximately 268 people (some focus groups attendees also responded to the survey).

Further views and expertise sort

This research was governed by a Steering Committe, comprising Craig Langdon (Chair), Matiu Julian, Kate Scott, Lee-Ann Marsh, Hiraina Tangiora and Dr Lilla du Toit. Further advice and oversight was provided by Paul Hollings, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence and Lisa Rogers and Matt Hampton from the New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust. We wish to also acknowledge Prof. Hamish Gow, Lincoln University.

Throughout the research journey, and prior to submitting each progress report, further specialist views were sought. For example, before submitting the principles report in July 2023, a draft was sent for review to a technical reference group comprising 18 senior practitioners in the leadership development field, including those leading in Māori and Pasifika contexts.

Further important validation has come from engagement with the Tinga Hora and Muka Tangata Workforce Development Councils, particularly in terms of the potential for resonance between the proposed leadership model and Te Ao Māori concepts.

A draft of this report was also sent for review to a technical reference group comprising over 20 leaders (some of whom sought input from colleagues also). The technical reference group included those leading in Māori and Pasifika contexts as well as senior practitioners in the fields of leadership development, psychology, education and training, and agri-business leadership.

In addition, Dave Taylor, from Intelligent Ink—was engaged to support the drafting and consolidation of the multiple case studies and stories gained throughout the research.

Skills Consulting Group was engaged as a vocational education and adult learning expert to provide technical advice relating to the options around credentials, including non-formal, informal, and formal NZQA-recognised options for defining and recognising competencies.

This relationship was then deepened by asking the lead expert from Skills Group Josh Williams, to join the team and become the third co-author of this report, further enhancing the framework section. The framework in this research presents unique challenges when it comes to measurement, at least insofar as traditional competency models go. Some of the concepts discussed, particularly at the 'true' end of leadership proficiency, tend towards ineffable concepts not easily pinned down to tangible or generalised demonstrations of competency.

Philosophical approach

The philosophical approach is provided to explain how and why we came to the conclusions we did, and the academic rigour that was applied throughout. It also shares why this report is based on principles, as opposed to a linear list of behaviours with examples and case studies to illustrate the points, or a narrow set of boxes to tick as one progresses through their leadership journey. The philosophical approach emphasises the fact that leading, and leadership are not transactional or quantitative steps—leadership is so much deeper than that, as you will have seen throughout this report. The research has been grounded in the:

1. ontological assumption of nominalism

2. the epistemological approach of interpretivism

3. qualitative methods

What does this mean?
Ontology refers to the study of the nature of reality (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2001).[119] In contrast to realism, where the real world is assumed to have stable and law-like structures (Habermas, 1972; Lather, 1991; Ma, 2015).[120] Nominalism assumes that social reality is relative. It suggests that social reality is not independent of the members of that society, but it emerges as a product of their relationships. We do not believe there is a 'single truth' to explain the principles and practice of leadership in the sector, and we fundamentally believe that the act of leading is about relationships, and therefore, this research is based on nominalist ontology.

Epistemology considers the ways of knowing, or how knowledge can be acquired (Creswell, 2016; Schwandt, 2001; Tai & Ajjawi, 2016).[121] Positivism asserts that society operates in accordance with general laws (Ma, 2015) with a single truth (Creswell, 2016; Habermas, 1972; Lather, 1991) and uses a numeric language, seeking to find uniform rules and formulas to explain and forecast human behaviour—it does not factor in context and it assumes that social life is constant (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).[122] In contrast to positivism, we took an interpretivism epistemological approach, which suggests that reality is both multiple and relative (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988), and that it is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001; Edirisingha, 2012).[123]

Understanding the principles and practice of leadership does not lead to one distinct, objective truth or rule or box to tick. Our aim has been to understand the various idiosyncratic, but also similar realities of the principles and practices of leadership in this sector. This is achieved by obtaining accounts of the subjective experiences of members within the sector.

In quantitative methodology, social phenomena are investigated using mathematical and statistical techniques (Given, 2008; Mackey & Gass, 2011), where data is usually collected in the form of numbers or numerical scores.[124] In contrast, we used primarily qualitative methodology, which is more useful for answering questions relating to 'why' or 'how' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). With a qualitative approach, open-ended questions are typically asked, which provides the participant with considerably more scope to give a detailed response in comparison to simply ticking a box in a questionnaire. Creswell (1998) also argues that a qualitative approach is most suitable when the researcher seeks to understand a complex issue from the participants' points of view.[125] Qualitative techniques provide a greater level of depth and understanding of the principles and practices of leadership in the sector.

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NOTES

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