Leader-leader readiness toolkit

Why have a Leader-leader culture in your business? Your competition will copy your products if they are right. They'll copy your services; they'll imitate your branding; they may even try to poach your people!

However, there is one thing they will never be able to copy, and that's your culture! Your culture is the very thing that makes your business special, distinct, and unique. It's your competitive-edge and advantage. Your culture informs your people what's acceptable and what's important.

Leadership culture

Developing a leadership culture expands the essence of your business culture by adopting an entirely new take on leadership. A leadership culture operates from a solid core of personal ownership, each individual taking responsibility and accountability for their actions and results; where everyone thinks, feels, and acts like it's their business, regardless of their job title, office, or place on the hierarchy. It's where individuals are:

- Enterprising, entrepreneurial and proactive
- Focused on getting to the solution rather than concentrating on the problem (The glass is half-full, not half-empty!)
- Keen to doo whatever it takes to build a world-class legacy business that is revered by the competition, sets the benchmark for industry standards, and is known as a great place to work
- Concerned about results and outcomes, and do their part to reduce costs
- Taking personal ownership for achieving results that move the business forward (Whether they work in the post room or sit in the boardroom.)

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- Shaping the culture, stay positive and lead by example.

The leader-follower structure has been with us for generations and is perpetuated through businesses to this very day. A hierarchical, command and control structure with decision-making from the top is what we know, and for good reason. Throughout history, many significant achievements have been accomplished through the leader-follower model, and it has enabled many people to achieve success in their chosen field.

It is precisely why the leader-follower way of doing business has been so successful that it is so hard to give up. But it was developed during a period when humankind's primary work was physical, and as a result, it's optimised for getting physical work out of people.

The challenge

In our modern world, the most important work we do is cognitive, and the leader-follower structure isn't a perfect model for intellectual work. Differing motivations and aspirations, particularly from one generation to the next, only exacerbate the problem and demand an alternative approach.

People who are treated like followers have the expectations of followers and act as followers. That means they have limited decision-making authority and little incentive to give the utmost of their intellect, energy, and passion. Those who take orders usually run at half speed, under-utilising their imagination and initiative.

In a leader-follower model, all decision-making defaults to the leader and therefore, the business gets squashed, constrained, and contracted, reducing the headspace to grow the business.

It can be particularly challenging when the leader is exceptionally charismatic, or worse when they're an out-and-out autocrat because the ability of people to shine is increasingly limited over time.

In a leader-follower structure, the performance of the business is closely linked to the ability of the principal leader at the top, so inevitably there is a natural tendency to develop personality-driven leadership; an approach that might deliver short-term results, but will never allow you to build a high-performing, sustainable, legacy business.

The solution: Leader-leader

A leader-leader structure is fundamentally different from the leader-follower model. At its core is the belief that we can all be leaders, and in fact, it's best when we all are. Leadership is not some mystical quality that some possess and others do not. As humans, we all have what it takes to take the lead under specific circumstances.

The leader-leader model not only achieves remarkable improvements in effectiveness and morale but also makes the business stronger. Critically, these improvements are enduring, decoupled from the leader's personality and presence. Leader-leader structures are significantly more resilient, and they do not act as if the designated leader is always right. Further, leader-leader structures naturally spawn additional leaders throughout the organisation. It's a force that can't be stopped.

The faster you can get every single person in your business to embrace and demonstrate leadership behaviours, regardless of their position, the quicker you'll secure your position as a world-class company.

The race is on to grow leaders, team members, and colleagues fast. You must develop a leader-leader structure and a leadership culture before your competitors do!

Get your business ready

To truly develop a Leader Leaders culture, you have to empower your people. The challenge with empowerment is that if people are not adequately enabled, it becomes a train wreck.

These three simple steps that sense check enablement and ensure that your empowering approach delivers results.

Step one: Mindset

The first step is to make sure the mindset of your people is where it needs to be. People need to buy in to being empowered emotionally.

Work through each of the following stages, completing the sentences as you go along. Capture all of the information you believe to be relevant (The box will keep growing!):

Current mindset	Future mindset	Action
The current mindset of our people is:	The mindset we will need in the future to create a truly empowered culture will be:	The steps we need to take as a business to achieve that are:

Now take action. Start to implement the changes you have identified in the right-hand column.

Step two: Skillset

Ensure that everyone is equipped with the skills to do their role and operate in a leader-leader environment.

Work through each of the following stages, completing the sentences as you go along. Capture all of the information you believe to be relevant (The box will keep growing!):

Current skills	Future skills	Action
The current skills of our people are:	The skills we will need in the future to create a truly empowered culture will be:	The steps we need to take as a business to achieve that are:

Now take action. Start to implement the changes you have identified in the righthand column.

Step three: Toolset

The final step is to provide the tools they need to be successful in their role.

Work through each of the following stages; completing the sentences as you go along. Capture all of the information you believe to be relevant (The box will just keep growing!):

Current Tools	Future Tools	Action
The current tools our people use are:	The tools we will need in the future to create a truly empowered culture will be:	The steps we need to take as a business to implement those tools are:

Now take action. Start to implement the changes you have identified in the right-hand column.

Take action; achieve more

- Work with your teams to fully-understand the mindset of your people and the shift, if any, that is required
- Implement and required changes in a logical and controlled way, don't rush in!
- Seek input and feedback from all aspects of the team, show support and act or respond accordingly

Well done from your Pathways team