



Human Flourishing

2024 Position Statement



The Issue

The 'business as usual' models are failing us, and are inadequate in the face of escalating complexity and change. We need a new compass to navigate the perpetual, pervasive, and exponential change defining the current era. The current challenges are two-fold and interconnected:

1. Leadership (*will we have the well-equipped leaders we need to navigate complexity in time?*)
2. Human flourishing (*how can people thrive in their workplaces and what impact does that have on their lives and society?*).

In recent years, on a collective level, we have confronted a myriad of systemic challenges, with the COVID-19 pandemic leaving lasting impacts on global public health, economies, and societal structures. Escalating climate change concerns and environmental devastation underscore the need for urgent calls to action in sustainability and resilience. The interconnected nature of the issues we face on a global and organisational level leaves us on a search for new models and tools. We also need leaders and a workforce that is well-equipped, healthy and engaged. However, many leaders and organisations find themselves inadequately prepared to confront these systemic challenges, needing more cognitive and emotional maturity and another set of leadership tools essential for navigating complexity. In turn, this results in a deficiency in leadership readiness, which not only jeopardizes organisational success in navigating complexity but also impedes the larger-scale systems change we need.

On an organisational and systemic level, many workplaces are set up in ways that harm health and wellness and disengage their people. "Globally, just 21% of employees are engaged according to Gallup's analysis of over 100,000 businesses in 96 countries."¹ This isn't to say that modern-day capitalism hasn't created many benefits for millions of workers. For example, we see some white-collar workers supported in well-being initiatives and greater workplace safety measures across industries and in many countries. However, there is also much inequality for many other millions - inhuman labour practices still exist and many continue to be paid below a living wage. Even for those in better working conditions, aspects of emotional and mental well-being are non-existent in most workplaces. Stanford Professor Jeffrey Pfeffer's work "contends that many modern management practices are toxic to employees—hurting engagement, increasing turnover, and destroying their physical and emotional health—and to company performance".² In treating humans like machines and resources, calculating productivity rates, KPIs, performance reviews, and more, we've continued to dehumanize the humans of our workforce and this impacts how they can show up in their lives, families, communities, and society. Resulting in a significant part of the workforce that isn't enabled to flourish, feel agency, and connect with their humanness.

1 <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/468233/employee-engagement-needs-rebound-2023.aspx>

2 <https://jeffreypfeffer.com/books/dying-for-a-paycheck/>

Our Approach at Cultivating Leadership

Leadership: Cultivating Leadership recognizes that organisations and leaders encounter a level of complexity that surpasses historical norms, and our human systems—both organisational and bodily—are not inherently equipped to navigate this terrain. Leaders need new and better coping mechanisms to address the multifaceted challenges of our time. In taking a holistic approach to business and leadership, we strive to create spaces that enable complexity thinking, adaptability, systemic perspectives, empathy, and embrace uncertainty. At Cultivating Leadership we support leaders to create the conditions within their organisations for humans to thrive, and through the impact, they can make in the world.

To walk the talk: We are a regenerative organisation that does regenerative things with leaders. However, this isn't just a leader-to-leader space, this is a different way to do business, moving away from traditional models that aren't healthy for people or the planet. Cultivating Leadership, since its inception, has strived to do things differently through a purpose-driven organisation.

Human flourishing: Recognizing the intricacies and interdependencies inherent in today's business world, we draw on adult development and complexity theories to create the conditions for flourishing both in the way we work with our clients, the design and delivery of our work, and how we work with each other.

A working definition of human flourishing is creating the conditions where people can be the best that they can be and continue to grow. It involves realizing one's potential, cultivating positive relationships, and contributing to the broader community, resilience, and continual growth.

A New Model for Business and Leadership

At Cultivating Leadership, we are taking the following actions:

Equipping Our Leaders & Clients

We strive to meet the leaders we work with where they are at and equip them with the tools and processes to grow and adapt themselves, their teams and their organisations. Equipping leaders to navigate complexity and fostering genuine care in the workplace engages individuals in their professional and personal lives and also contributes to cultivating leaders and citizens capable of addressing our most pressing global issues. This is difficult to measure objectively as measuring the impact of our work is non-linear. When working with complexity, we cannot think linearly since things are interconnected

in unpredictable ways. Instead of simply measuring performance statistics, we seek to understand impact through shifts in the systems and changes in narrative.

We also build collaborative relationships with clients and prioritize continuous learning, collaboration, feedback, and iteration to ensure the work meets the needs of the clients we are serving. This involves co-design, piloting projects, and inviting program graduates to share their experiences. Our commitment to client success and understanding long-term impact is evidenced by our regular Advice or Clever calls, where associates of Cultivating Leadership continually learn from each other and improve the impact of our work. Clients are often invited to these sessions to create a mutually beneficial learning environment. To give clients confidence and provide a high level of protection to private information, we leverage data protection and privacy policies aligned with European General Data Protection Regulations, the highest standards globally. Ultimately, we work together with clients through deep relationships, formal research, and customized measurements to gauge the effectiveness of our impact.

Our Business Model: Purpose-Driven Impact and the TILT Foundation

Cementing our status as a purpose-driven organisation, in 2022 we created the TILT Foundation to demonstrate our commitment to reinvesting in societal impact. The TILT Foundation, established by our co-founders to become the not for profit owner of Cultivating leadership, ensures a sustainable and transparent structure aligned with our purpose. In perpetuity, 50% of profits are directed towards initiatives that intentionally remove barriers for underserved communities to access these funds. This philanthropic approach is Trust Based and aims to tilt the odds in favor of a more equitable and sustainable planet. We commit to further translating and leveraging what we do, acting as a bridge, so that those outside of Cultivating Leadership can benefit, learn and grow with us in developing purpose-driven organisations that reinforce a shift from exploitive ambitions to regenerative ambitions.

Equitable Access to Leadership Opportunities and Support

We commit to making our services accessible for leaders in underrepresented communities and we've started to track how many clients we serve in this space. We do this by offering a discounted rate to non-profits and public-facing programs. Our collaborations with non-profits represent over 20% of our client base in 2022. This is one of the ways we demonstrate our dedication to making leadership development accessible to those who can benefit from it, regardless of financial constraints. In 2023, we implemented an internal system to identify the percentage of clients we serve that aren't charged our full rate and are either 'low fee' or 'no fee' clients.

Creating Workplaces for Human Flourishing

We've committed to embodying the principles of human flourishing within how we operate. Our organisational norms and ways of being with one another are outlined in The Promise (colleagues' agreement) implemented in 2023. This replaces what you would

normally see in an organisation, for example, a code of conduct, description of values and norms, employer contract etc. The Promise is written from the perspective of mutuality and enabling good things to come into the world as opposed to the traditional type of employee-employer agreement focused around mistrust. The Promise is aligned with our culture that fosters trust, transparency, generosity, love, and continuous growth. We've flipped the narrative: instead of creating agreements based on fear of what can happen, we base them on trust and to enable good things to happen.

On an annual basis, we create working groups to review The Promise to ensure alignment with our commitments. A dedicated working group monitors both the organisation's health and adherence to our purpose, in collaboration with the Holding Company Board to ensure compliance. We've implemented mechanisms to ensure our work environment aligns with the demands of complexity and change, this includes: our Ombud Policy, feedback processes, detailed processes to address interpersonal conflicts, and health & safety standards. Our Whistleblower Policy aims to foster a culture where employees feel empowered to report wrongdoing without fear of reprisal.

We hold that when organisations create these type of conditions for human flourishing, we create human workplaces - and our definition of a human workplace is "one that supports everyone to be at their best whatever that means to them, for the benefit of every aspect of their lives".³ For instance, when humans are in better shape to go home after work, they can show up as the best parents, partners and contributing members of society they can be. This matters because it's going to take all of us, in all sectors, to work toward a world that is just, diverse, flourishing, and sustainable.

The people working for you are entrusted in your care.

Cultivating Leadership originated in Aotearoa, New Zealand. We are on a journey of understanding what it means to be an organisation founded in Aotearoa with a presence globally and aspirations to make a difference on the world stage. At our core is acknowledgement, respect and giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We believe that our growing understanding in this area in Aotearoa will help us better embrace indigenous wisdom in our work in other contexts.

We endeavour to weave the notion from Māori tradition that Colleagues and Clients are entrusted into our care. We think of Colleagues as an extended whanau (family). These notions of care and trust inform the design of our internal and client systems.

³ Human Work: Five Leadership Mindsets for Humanising the Workplace (2023), Leanne Holdsworth and Naryan Wong.

Cultivating Leadership has grown from conversations around a kitchen table and one client to 120+ clients of all shapes, sizes and sectors from around the world. To date, our organisational size is 90+ colleagues globally, and we continue to expand in size—doubling our numbers in the last five years. Since the start of 2019, 51 people have joined our team, and, of those, 46 are with us currently. We are an organisation that embraces and encourages learning and practice. We tend to stay together in large part because of how we work with one another.

The Leadership Team (The Cultivator Group) are the stewards of this position statement and will continue to oversee and review the implementation of our commitments to Human Flourishing on an annual basis.

With commitment, Cultivating Leadership

Signed _____

Name _____

Date _____