

Questions for reflection and discussion:

Where are you on your regenerative journey, towards truly thriving as an organisation?

The questions provided in the sections below offer a framework for reflection – what we call a ‘Reflection Practice’ that can act as a catalyst for:

- 1) intentional self-reflection,*
- 2) dialogue with others,*
- 3) planning organisational change.*

You might wish to think of this Reflection Practice as a three-step flow: 1st take some time out to pause and reflect on these questions, seeing what comes up for you, 2nd share the Reflection Practice with others and dialogue together, and see what themes emerge, 3rd start to hone-in on areas for potential change that can help your organisation adapt and evolve toward a more regenerative and developmental culture.

Reflection Tool Authors:

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You will find this Reflection Practice most meaningful if you consider each section in separate sessions, so focussing on one aspect at a time.

REFLECTION SESSION 1: PURPOSE

Often we come to think of profit as a prime-mover, but it's not. The purpose of the business is its 'reason for being'. Think of profit as the air we breathe – we need it to exist, yet breathing is not our reason for being. Likewise for the organisation, it has a purpose beyond hitting the numbers, a reason for being that galvanises and coheres the organisation amid volatile fast-moving climates.

- What is the driving purpose of the organisation?
- How does this purpose contribute to the flourishing of life (i.e. make a positive difference to people and planet)?
- Was it this current purpose that inspired the creation of the organisation at the outset? If not, what inspired its creation?
- Do you have a sense that the organisation has lost sight of the founding purpose over time? Or has the organisation's purpose strengthened/evolved over time, if so how?
- Have there been any key events or periods of transformation that have affected the organisation's purpose? What are these and what was their impact?
- How far does the organisation's purpose influence:
 - its culture and everyday behaviours?
 - governance?
 - internal processes and procedures?
 - interactions with external stakeholder? (existing and potential customers, suppliers, partners, investors?)
- Are suppliers/external partners chosen in terms of how they relate with the organisational purpose?
- Is there a tension between being true to the driving purpose and being profitable? If so, how is this tension held by different members of the leadership team, the board and (if different to the board) owners?
- How clear is everyone within the organisation on its purpose? Do you sense that this purpose inspired them to join the organisation and continues to inspire their commitment to the organisation?

- Are there any regular activities to engage teams across the organisation (and stakeholders beyond) in understanding the organisation's purpose?
 - Within the organisation, how do you ensure that the organisation's purpose is meaningful to teams and to individual roles?
 - How far do you involve everyone across the organisation in breathing life into the purpose (and ensuring its continuing influence)?
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REFLECTION SESSION 2: CULTURE AND VALUES

If the purpose is your organisation's 'why', think of its culture & values as the 'way' – the way people behave while delivering the purpose. Values and culture guide the organisation and its people as they go about their business day to day.

- Does your organisation have defined values? If so, were they defined by the founder/board/the leadership or co-created as a reflection of the true character of the organisation as a whole?
- How would you describe the values and behaviours of the organisation in your own words? Is this very different to the defined values?
- How far do the organisation's values influence:
 - its culture and everyday behaviours?
 - internal processes and procedures?
 - interactions with external stakeholder? (existing and potential customers, suppliers, partners, investors?)
- How deeply do people across the organisation understand the organisational values and what these mean to them on a day to day basis? Are any efforts made to understand individuals' values and how these may be connected to the organisational values?
- Are there any regular activities to engage teams across the organisation (and stakeholders beyond) in breathing life into the values?
- Is there a tension between what happens in reality and any defined organisational values and external public relations messaging of organisational culture? If so, how is this tension held across the organisation? Are people comfortable to call out behaviours, decisions, processes which don't align with the values?

- How do values and culture differentiate across geographies? How does any differentiation and localisation inter-relate with global organisational culture (if applicable)?
 - What is morale like in the organisation? How do you know? How do retention levels compare with similar organisations? Are there pockets of higher turn-over or lower morale, and of higher morale? Why is this? How is this related to, for example, leadership, employee engagement, team spirit and personal development?
 - Are personal awareness and wellbeing activities (such as mindfulness, nature connection or exercise) embraced as conducive to personal and organisational vitality?
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REFLECTION SESSION 3: DECISION MAKING

The day-to-day decision-making processes and protocols greatly influence both the tactical and strategic vitality of the organisation.

- How would you describe decision making – on a scale of 1 being dictatorial ‘parent-child’ top-down through to 10 being self-managing ‘adult-adult’ networked teams making decisions locally without hierarchical approval?
- Is there a tension between top down decisions and more distributed collective decision making? How is this tension held in the business? Is there any rationale behind the different approaches or is it dependent on the individual personalities of leaders?
- How far are different people across the organisation given a voice in decision making processes? Is their voice encouraging, welcomed and embraced? Are there any systems in place to ensure that diverse perspectives are fed into decision making processes or is it dependent on the preferences of individual leaders?
- Are people given the space to challenge leaders’ ideas/decisions and to be genuinely heard? Do they feel safe to do so? How do you know?
- Have you experienced any differences in the quality of decisions and engagement of those affected where decisions are made in a more distributed (less ‘top-down’) way? Or at least where those affected have been given a genuine voice before decisions are made?

REFLECTION SESSION 4: COLLABORATION & INNOVATION

In this fast-paced ever-changing business environment the ability to innovate and collaborate across teams and also between organisations greatly influences the future-fitness of the organisation.

- Would you say the culture is one of embracing experimentation and ongoing organic learning or one of prescriptive cook-book approaches? Or perhaps it is a blend of both?
- What's the attitude to failure and mistakes? Are they seen as an opportunity for learning, or something to be feared and perhaps even covered up (perhaps because of the possible consequences)? Or something in-between?
- Are there mind-sets that resist sharing between departments, functions and teams? If so, why do you think this is?
- Is creativity and innovation seen as the province of a select group of people or is it disseminated throughout the organisation?
- How do you engage a diverse range of people (internally and externally) to maximise creativity and innovation?
- How often do teams of diverse stakeholders get together for the purpose of enriching collaboration and innovation without pre-defined targets/outcomes?
- How are suppliers/external partners engaged with, on a scale of 1 being tight prescriptive management and 10 being fluidity aligned through a shared intent?
- How are 'competitors' perceived and engaged with?
- What about wider stakeholders such as local communities, pressure groups, think tanks, social media forums, thought leader networks, industry bodies, etc.?
- Is attending peer activities, networking events and other related activities outside the organisation viewed as healthy or as a distraction/poor use of time?

REFLECTION SESSION 5: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS & TENSION TRANSFORMATION

The organisation is made up of complex processes of human relating. The capacity to work with tensions and transform mis-understandings or differences into creative potential, helps the organisation continuously learn, adapt and evolve.

- Do people openly engage in authentic and meaningful conversations about their feelings, intuitions/instincts, passions and tensions? Are they encouraged to do so/given space to do so?
- Is such openness/vulnerability modelled by leaders?
- Are people encouraged to - and feel safe to – provide ad hoc informal feedback? Is this in all directions (between team members, leader to teams, teams to leaders?)
- Is conflict always perceived as negative or are tensions sometimes perceived as healthy in terms of growth and learning? How are people supported to approach conflict in a constructive way?
- What % of people are experienced in any of the following: giving and receiving feedback, dialogue, active or deep listening, non-violent communication, restorative practice and coaching conversations?
- Are there team away days and/or nature immersions? How often and how are they facilitated?
- Across the organisation, are there any brewing tensions just under-the-surface? How do you know – is this sensed or heard?
- Is ‘positive news’ encouraged through the sharing of positive stories and the rewarding/recognition of sharing, assisting and being appreciative of others’ contributions?
- Are there activities for people at the personal and collective level to learn to be more self-aware of egotistic behaviours, unconscious (or conscious) biases, personal limitations or masks, and how to get beyond these?
- If tensions/conflict becomes destructive or damaging, how is this resolved?

REFLECTION SESSION 6: WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

Over the last couple of years, hybrid working and the capacity to embrace different working requirements has created a new world of work.

- When working on-site, are there quiet places intentionally allocated in the building where people can go to reflect, let-go and revitalize? Whether working on-site or remotely, is time and space scheduled for creative thinking, brainstorming, and contemplative activities?
 - Whether working on-site or remotely, is time and space encouraged for people to relax and chat together, to build and strengthen connections and mutual understanding?
 - Are in-between times kept sacred for quiet, reflective time or are busy diaries viewed as the norm with back to back meetings? (whether in person or online meetings/calls)
 - Does the working environment enhance creativity, collaboration and flourishing or deaden it? What about creative spaces, white board areas, casual meeting spots? How does this translate to a hybrid or remote working model if that's relevant in your organisation?
 - Is there an awareness of infrastructure, spatial design and layout in relation to personal and organisational effectiveness? Are personal preferences/differences considered? For example, do working environments accommodate neuro diversity and other particular needs?
 - How flexible is the approach to working arrangements? (e.g. place and times of work) How far is the approach based on trust, balancing individual needs/preferences with operational needs?
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REFLECTION SESSION 7: LEADERSHIP MINDSET

The way we show up as leaders has a great effect on those around us and the overall vitality of the living organisation. Ways of leading that are incongruent with the organisation's values and ethos can undermine trust and disempower people, greatly affecting organisational future-fitness.

- How do leaders perceive growth for the organisation? What about transformation, innovation, reconfiguration and renewal?
- How is power distributed across the organisation?
- What proportion of the leadership team would you say view the organisation as a living, evolving entity and what proportion perceive it as a machine?
- How self aware are the organisation's leaders of their influence on the culture and values of the organisation?



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→ How far and how consistently do leaders model regenerative behaviours and ways of being, to enable others to thrive? Where there are inconsistencies, are these through conscious or unconscious choices? For example:

- To what extent do leaders truly listen to others? How far do they encourage the views of others?
- To what extent do leaders model creating space – for rest, thinking, creativity etc?
- How far do the leaders reflect the purpose and values of the organisation in their day to day interactions and in their decisions?
- How far do leaders practise self-awareness, taking time to reflect and sense if their behaviours and mindset are supporting or damaging a regenerative approach?
- How far do leaders practise patience in their approach, in their decision making and reactions, embracing natural ebbs and flows?
- Do all leaders welcome 360-degree feedback and actively seek out feedback from those around them?
- Do some leaders have an understanding of systems-thinking and the interconnected nature of social, economic and ecological challenges at both local and global levels?

→ To what extent do leaders invest in their own personal growth as leaders, taking time to become more self-aware and better understand how to model regenerative behaviours and ways of being?

BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHORS



Giles Hutchins is a pioneering practitioner and senior adviser at the forefront of the [r]evolution in organizational and leadership consciousness and developmental approaches that enhance personal, organizational and systemic agility and vitality. He is author and co-author of several leadership and organizational development papers, and the books *The Nature of Business* (2012), *The Illusion of Separation* (2014), *Future Fit* (2016) *Regenerative Leadership* (2019) and *Leading by Nature* (2022). Chair of *The Future Fit Leadership Academy* and Founder of *Leadership Immersions*, co-founder of *Biomimicry for Creative Innovation* and *Regenerators*, he runs an international leadership center at Springwood Farm, an area of outstanding natural beauty near London, UK. Previously held corporate roles - Head of Transformation Practice for KPMG, Global Director and Head of Sustainability for Atos (150,000 employees, over 40 countries). He provides coaching at individual and organizational levels for those seeking to transform their personal and/or work lives. He is also a keynote speaker on the future of business and regenerative leadership, and guest lectures at international business schools. He blogs at www.thenatureofbusiness.org



Stephanie Paterson is an experienced employment lawyer and co-founded the specialist employment law firm Ramsay Paterson LLP in 2014. Prior to this, Stephanie worked in large commercial law firms, advising both UK and global employers on a range of complex UK employment law issues. Driven by the belief that organisations truly thrive when reflecting purpose and values in all they do, Ramsay Paterson LLP was specifically formed to work with organisations in a purpose and values driven context and now acts for a number of the UK's leading ethical brands, across both commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Through this firm, Stephanie takes a holistic and human focussed approach to legal advice that fits well with regenerative businesses, blending progressive ideas with strong technical employment law expertise. Her firm's [legal comment blog](#) considers current employment law and HR related issues through a purpose and values driven lens.