

Authentic Leadership

Research has shown that authentic leaders create a positive effect on organisational behaviour that leads to performance gains. New Zealand studies have identified that our leaders perform well in some aspects of authentic leadership but could do better in others.

What is Authentic Leadership?

There are four components of authentic leadership, as outlined below:

1. Self-awareness (awareness of values and beliefs).
2. Balanced information processing (encourages others to share their viewpoints).
3. Moral and ethical perspective (values expressed through actions).
4. Transparency in relationships (relationships are open and honest).

Feedback on New Zealand Leaders

Research shows that the New Zealand leader has a strong moral and ethical perspective and relatively high levels of openness and honesty. However, they are unlikely to encourage and acknowledge differing points of view, have low self-awareness and are resistant to change. They have an inner need to be "right" that overwhelms the ability to be "real".

How does Authentic Leadership Impact on Organisational Performance?

Low authentic leadership discourages some of the behaviours that are key to success - creativity, innovation, risk-taking, openness and a connection to the vision of the organisation. Authentic leaders support high performance by building confidence, hope, optimism and resilience within others.

How can Authentic Leadership be Developed?

Developing authentic leadership requires an ongoing learning process, rather than a one off training event. Authenticity is about being yourself and to do that you need to know yourself. An accurate self-image can be developed by soliciting feedback from others using, for example, a 360 degree feedback process. A coaching relationship can effectively support an ongoing process of seeking feedback and reviewing and changing behaviour to become more authentic.