



Institute for Sustainable Leadership
Driving high-performing and resilient organisations

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NEWSLETTER

Issue 3



IN THE ISSUE

[Back to rescuing the SDGs by Dr. Gayle Avery](#)

[From Dr. HarryBee's Desk](#)

[How to improve wellbeing at work by Dr. Mark Williams](#)

[Meet our Community](#)

"If we are to truly be able to "build back better" from the pandemic, environmental progress from recovery spending must be tracked and monitored against the SDGs. We need to be able to assess progress to better target interventions and investment; to ensure that the right actions are taken; and to verify that these actions are producing results without unintended consequences. But to achieve this, we need sufficient data."

Peter Paul van de Wijs (Global Reporting Initiative) and Pietro Bertazzi (CDP)

BACK TO RESCUING THE SDGS

By *Gayle Avery, Co-Founding Director of ISL*



In 2015, all member countries of the United Nations signed up to the UN's Agenda 2030, which has 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) at its heart. The SDGs are aimed at ending poverty, protecting our planet and ensuring peace and prosperity for all inhabitants by 2030.

Now halfway along their journey to 2030, the SDGs have already experienced incredible setbacks. All sorts of crises have impacted these calls to action, making even collecting data for the last report needed to gain a general overview of the world's progress incredibly challenging. Covid-19 was a global pandemic that set us back in some areas that had seen progress, putting more pressure on all nations to urgently intervene in their own political agenda to achieve and maintain certain standards. Climate change is hitting many regions with a vengeance.

Reaching the SDGs requires a coordinated effort from individuals, organisations, and countries, and many are responding to the call. In our 2019 study tour, we visited the headquarters of Allianz in Munich after participants had prepared a sustainable leadership report about the company, researched its leadership system, and analysed the integration of SDGs into their operations, strategic vision and general mission. The organisation praised this valuable report and met our high expectations with a very detailed explanation on all its projects related to the SDGs, including developing a useful measuring tool available to all to use. (We are very much looking forward to resuming our successful study tours in 2023, covid permitting). Looking into the implementation of an SDG agenda in their verticals as much as in their CSR and ESG departments are essential practices for any organisation.

When the Institute decided to share our expertise in Sustainable Leadership in our virtual classroom, the Foundations in Sustainable Leadership course was born. It's our signature course and has a specific module on how different aspects of world's leadership systems benefit an organisation. Here, you'll see how important it is to keep on innovating, developing your people and updating areas of your business that lead to sustainable leadership, because every step into that direction is a win for your business, society and the planet.

I hope that wherever you are, you spend time to reflect on your role and your organisation's role in advancing the SDGs, measuring this responsibility with data, and using them not only as a guideline for a better world but as a tool to motivate executives and employees to embrace sustainable leadership.

Enjoy reading this issue

FROM DR. HARRYBEE'S DESK

In this section Dr. Harald Bergsteiner, Co-Founder of ISL, focuses on the theme of the month for our readers. His expertise in turning highly complex concepts into simple terms makes adopting the [23 Honeybee Sustainable Practices](#) accessible to practitioners and researchers alike.

This is a continuation of Dr. Harry's previous article in our 3 Issue. You can read the second part [here](#).



UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP: *OF LEADERS, HEROES, ROLE MODELS, DESPOTS AND BUFFOONS (PART 3)*

By Harry Bergsteiner

Buffoon

Of the five archetypes discussed here, the buffoon is the most difficult to define, basically because he, unlike the court jester, doesn't do anything of much use. Buffoons in essence make light of even disastrous situations and provide no solutions for them. For example, a buffoon might justify his complete disinterest in addressing catastrophic bushfires and say something like : There's no point my being here, I don't hold a hose; whereas a wise aboriginal elder might say: In future when you do fire hazard reduction, try a 'cool fire'. Contrast this buffoonery with President Ronald Reagan, who, while not regarded as one of the US's greater presidents, was greatly admired for his self-deprecating sense of humour. After the failed assassination attempt on his life, which resulted in a near-fatal gunshot wound, he turned to his wife and said: "I'm sorry, honey, I forgot to duck".

We can, however, identify some traits that tend to characterise buffoons. In the context of this piece, the term refers to persons that lack pathos, ethos and logos, and who make fools of themselves by making pronouncements on things they know little or nothing about (lack of logos) and who see disasters as mere photo opportunities (lack of pathos and ethos). Since buffoons of dubious character that do not respect whatever followers they might have, are themselves uninformed, have limited interest in having informed followers, and do not rate well on the second and third of my three leadership tests, they cannot, by definition, be effective leaders.

Examples of buffoon:

Donald Trump (1946 >). The 45th president of the US from 2017–2021. Scholars and historians rank Trump as one of the worst presidents in US history. Psychiatrists, psychologists and cognition researchers have described him as narcissistic, prone to grandiosity, delusional, neurotic, a relentless reward-seeker, aggressive, vindictive and a host of other unflattering epithets.

FROM DR. HARRYBEE'S DESK CONT'

Australia has its own examples of this archetype, however, political correctness forbids me to name them, but here are two with clues: one, there is the punch-drunk pugilist monk; and two, continuing the boxing metaphor, the intellectual lightweight who would struggle to go three rounds with a revolving door since this requires knowing where one has been, where one is, and where one is going. In Australia we have the rather idiosyncratic phrase for judging a buffoon's decisions: Would the decision pass the pub test? The jury is still out in the case of my second example who'll never ascend to Shakespeare's wit but excels at witless buffoonery.

Wrap-up

Leaders, heroes and role models can be embodied in a single person with one of these three archetypes dominating or even being absent; despots, with the exception of the aemetai of Greece, are by definition not leaders because they rule by force and not ethos, pathos and logos; and a buffoon is a "comic imitation of [wo]men worse than average" and so hardly qualifies for the title of leader. The COP-26 meetings in Glasgow of global leaders were interesting in providing unintended irony on what I have said above. Thus the absence of Xi Jiping and Vladimir Putin from the COP-26 was entirely appropriate given that, by definition, they are not 'leaders' but 'despots'. Similarly, the absence of Donald Trump, a buffoon and would-be dictator, was appropriate, given he is singularly unqualified to attend a meeting of leaders.



Donald Trump by The Guardian

Epilogue

Having read my piece on defining leader, hero, role model, despot and buffoon you could be excused for thinking that I'm enamoured of the idea of the leader and that leadership is all about the leader. I am not. The reason for writing this piece is alluded to in my opening paragraph, namely that these terms are used very loosely and often inappropriately. In fact, the role of and need for leaders is grossly overstated; but if we are going to use these terms, we might as well use them in a logical and consistent way. Of much greater importance to the needs of the 21st century is the concept of a shared leadership culture, which enables and empowers every member of an organisation to exercise leadership that is commensurate with the particular skill set of that individual and the degree to which they personify the organisation's shared values. To learn more about that rather more complex story you may want to take one of our online leadership courses.

THE GOOD HIVE NEWS

In this section we bring you news that bring up hope, positivity and inspiration for your organisation. At the Institute we take pride in integrating theory with practice. Hence, this section showcases a way of living based on good principles, purpose and vision.



BIODEVERISTY DNA

NatureMetrics is a company that was born to bridge the gap between the environment and its conservation by providing a molecular profile of their biodiversity. Established in 2014, the company has doubled in size and has participated in important projects in areas such as the environmental impact of mining in Latin America, Uk and Africa and another project in the Peruvian Amazon with WWF. NatureMetrics is helping companies advance their environmental responsibility.



DEBUNKING COUNTRY RANKINGS

Dr. Harry Bergsteiner, Co-Founder and Head of Thought Leadership, has just released a video debunking country rankings by the WEF. This is not news for Dr. Bergsteiner or ISL who have a full paper ready to be read on our website. Interestingly, what drives public funding and corporations to open new businesses in these countries has always been influenced by fallacies. Data is clear, we tested it and used verified correlations for a country ranking that doesn't bend according to political interest. [Watch the short video](#) now or [read the paper](#) on the topic.

Connect with us



HOW TO IMPROVE WELLBEING AT WORK

The attrition-attraction challenge companies face today offers the opportunity of shifting from a short-term driven culture to a long-term resilient organisation. Wellbeing beyond physical and mental health has to be understood as a core area in daily operations. To attract and retain talent companies must link human connection with personal development, add intrinsic motivation and good health habits as essential elements in their culture. A few recommendations from renowned neuroscientist [Dr. Mark Williams](#) about wellbeing and sustainable leadership.



Improve long-term memory. In this section of our brain is where we store our habits, our behavioural patterns, our processes.

Change habits to change culture. Culture is about behaviours so in order to improve it there needs to be an understanding of triggers and environments that help building or recreating culture.

Make connecting easy. Human connection here doesn't mean to invest in table tennis settings or bean bag chairs. It refers to making time for connection in a hybrid environment, finding common interests and listening.

Improve attention. We live in a world that is constantly battling for our attention. People need to develop their attention skills by controlling and reducing distractions. Easy once you know what to do!

Interested in knowing more? Learn more [here](#) about Mark's microcourse: The Brain.



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MEET OUR ISL COMMUNITY

CLINT MCKELLAR

Clint McKellar Director of Business at Morgan Stanley. He is an experienced commercial leader combining cross sector practice in the financial sector, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, MedTech and workplace services. Clint approaches complexity with data and a focus on simplifying the problem statement. He is committed to developing people and enhancing culture as the best strategy to delivering goals and he recently completed the Foundations in Sustainable Leadership Course with the Institute for Sustainable Leadership.

What are your biggest lessons from sustainable leadership?

Among many important elements regarding Sustainable Leadership I consider Purpose, Context and defining Sustainability as three key learning outcomes that I consistently return to. **Purpose:** The idea of purpose as a key learning within any leadership practice might seem a given however in practice leadership is often a solution first approach with purpose losing out to what is usually financial performance. Sustainable Leadership practice however elevates the importance of replacing a "solution first" practice with purpose without crippling financial returns or tradeoffs. Purpose guides culture, it defines why we motivate, why we engage, why we promote from within, why we innovate or invest in systems. Its importance and connection to manager, employee and customer focus is what inherently drives performance outcomes. Purpose provides the space to think smart and it is the tool we can use to deliver change.

Context: Supports flexibility which leadership must navigate, promote and develop. The practice of Sustainable Leadership really highlighted for me the importance of surveying, investigating and questioning context in the process of making decisions. Unlike more classical leadership practices, Sustainable Leadership provides almost an ecosystem of applying the best tools to the job in real time. Sustainable Leadership recognises the importance for firm agility and that leading is not necessarily beholden to a title, role or tenure but utilising the right skills and knowledge within rapidly changing environments and context.

Defining Sustainability: General thinking regarding business' approach to sustainability is often reserved for performance outcomes associated with a Firm's CSR. Whilst these initiatives drive sustainable outcomes this narrow thinking often overlooks other important internal sustainability initiatives associated with people, systems and process. Developing a broad concept of what constitutes sustainability within the course of business helps leadership to think with purpose within all contexts.

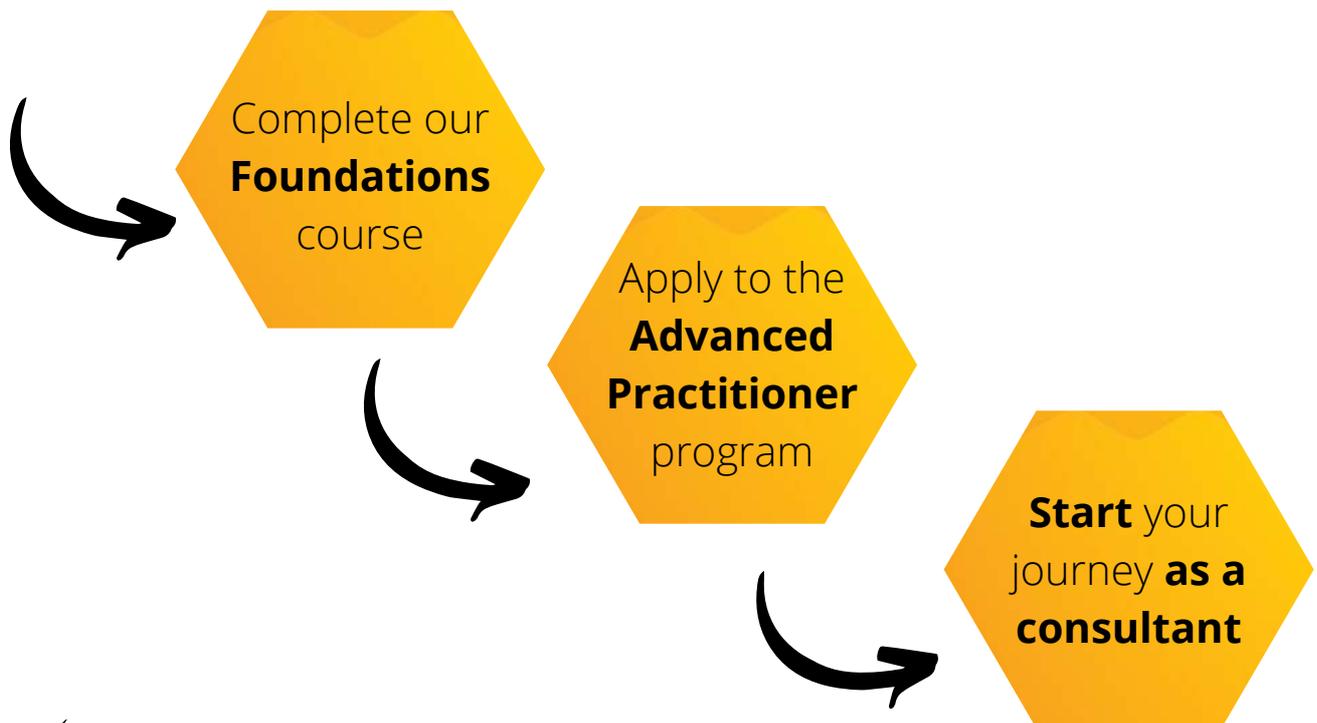
In your view, what is the importance of sustainable leadership to building better organisations?

My view on the importance of sustainable leadership in building better organisation is that it facilitates a more comprehensive and thorough view of business in all its contexts, scenarios and components which lead to identifying opportunities and in turn broader and greater outcomes. Sustainable Leadership provides a unique opportunity to impact careers, security and industry by delivering lasting change for the better. Organisations that recognise that they carry the responsibility of doing better will attract and retain talent and partners, deliver to customers a superior offering and inevitably deliver market performance across all criteria not just financial outcomes.





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