

Regenerative

Leader

Mindsets

What can you
do to become a
regenerative leader?

Nature has been practicing the art of regeneration for eons. Salamanders and newts can re-grow their limbs, tail, jaw, and retina. A scorpion replenishes its venom reservoir with a different composition from the original sting. Mammals renew skin, blood cells and hair. And the incredible hydra can regenerate into a smaller version of itself from a fragment of its cells.

These are vivid examples of how regeneration is, at its essence, a life-affirming way of being, thinking, and behaving. It speaks directly to keeping balance with the natural world, and asks: how do we participate in life - not work against it - in order to create conditions where the planet, people, and economies thrive?

It follows then that a Regenerative Leader will think and act in ways that are equally life-affirming. And for some, this requires a shift from the mechanistic, siloed, and transactional practices of the past, into a living systems way of thinking.

While still understanding the pragmatics of the profit and loss equation, Regenerative Leaders stay mindful of how we show up for our colleagues and teams (our work culture) and for the world, in terms of both our personal and organisational footprints.

The Regenerative Leader intentionally dismantles the paradigm that a People and Eco focus diminishes profit and strives to move beyond sustainability to renewal, restoration, and replenishment.

They ask:

How can I have a holistically positive impact



The Regenerative

Leaders Mindset

The Regenerative Leader's mindset is a reflective, self-organising, and energised alchemy of self and system awareness that is characterised by some of the following key attributes.

Regenerative Leaders (RL):

Encourage and seek out diverse thinkers to foster the emergence of ideas

Research shows us that the best innovations emerge in spaces that support diversity of thought. And this enables us to stay agile and responsive. Conversely, ideating and working only with like-minded people diminishes new thinking. RL's understand that other voices and viewpoints are not only important but necessary.

In Practice:

Citi Bank proactively pursues diverse perspectives at all levels of their organisation, which they foster through their [Affinity Groups](#) networking program. The purpose of the Affinity Groups is to respond to the needs and appreciate all their team members, so they can retain diverse talent.

Advocate for Sustainable Inclusion

Practicing [sustainable inclusion](#) is a recognition that our most vulnerable have the least voice. We need to amplify and elevate the voices in our systems who are most at risk from its challenges. Sustainable inclusion draws a direct line to social justice. A RL who practices it asks: is what I am proposing affordable, accessible, and available?

In Practice:

The [Albertson Group](#) of companies are committed to equal access opportunities and resources for the communities they serve, using a 6-point framework and a Racial Justice and Equity Advisory Group to drive the change.

Nurture the rise in Biophilia

Regenerative Leaders carry in them and foster the [spirit of biophilia](#), i.e., the instinct to connect with nature and living things. The pandemic has heightened this desire, reflecting our instinctive need to rebuild our affinity with the source of life.

In practice:

Eco-nudges - the spirit of biophilia can be embodied in numerous ways. In business, eco-nudges that inspire clients and customers to make more eco-system-thinking friendly choices can be very powerful. This might be as simple as elevating the language used to describe plant-based dishes, sharing leftover food from meetings or events, or giving customers a free plant.

Strive for equality

The Regenerative Leader is values driven and understands that equality takes many shapes and forms, affecting gender, race, and social status. Making a positive impact may mean re-examining our implicit biases around concepts such as meritocracy and what is fair. A RL understand that the playing field is uneven and intentionally seeks innovative ways to level it.

In practice:

In 2018, Starbucks committed to a 100 percent pay equity, and within twelve months hit that goal. But this had been some years in planning and was achieved by thinking outside the box to offer team members a combination of retirement and investment opportunities and increased health benefits, which included parental leave.

Champion collaboration over competition

Regenerative Leaders understand that a collaborative mindset offers more value than a competitive one. In a climate of interrupted supply chains, and increasingly complex challenges, collaborating with competitors and stakeholders has become an imperative.

In practice:

The [Beyond the Bag](#) initiative is a collaboration between the largest US retailers (including Target, CVS Health, and Walmart) with the aim of addressing single use plastic bag waste. Similar initiatives [have arisen](#) between Coca Cola and the WWF to manage plastic bottle waste.

Are mindful of connection to place

Being mindful of place and connection to place is about becoming part of life's bigger story. A RL asks: how can we operate in synchronicity and continuous improvement and renewal with our surroundings?

In practice:

Architects working in regenerative spaces, seek to mimic the natural environment, in order to harmonise with and complement it. They want to [tip the scales in favour of nature with designs such as green roofs and skins and rainwater captures](#).

Honour Future Generations

Sitting beneath the desire to commit to more regenerative practices is the conviction that we have a responsibility to [honour our future generations](#) and their right to a quality of life. Regenerative Leaders of today are horizon thinkers, able to see past the short-term dopamine hit of profit, to the long-term consequences of their actions.

In practice:

Nestle have introduced numerous practical regenerative initiatives that look to short and long-term horizons. They are currently supporting their dairy farmers to turn manure into biogas, so it can be repurposed for cooking, and therefore reduce the greenhouse effect.

Encourage the small ripples of change

Regenerative Leaders stay open to the opportunities for change and renewal within the system and encourage the small ripples. This means enabling teams and team members to test, learn, and fail on a small scale, and cross pollinate ideas and learnings. It means supporting the individual journey's and allowing team members to speak and live out their values.

In practice:

[Intuitive Research and Technology](#) initiated a Creative Incentive Program where team members can submit new ideas that are work and non-work related. They then provide start-up funding and share profits with the creator.

Motivate with new incentives

When we practice a regenerative mindset, leaders and teams are incentivised based upon social and environmental targets, rather than purely economic ones.

In practice:

There are currently many examples of environmental incentivisation in agriculture. But it does not have to stop there. We can incentivise our team members through rewards or performance metrics to adopt internally and externally regenerative behaviours – from a paperless office to an abundance mindset.

Make space and time to dance and play

Regenerative Leaders appreciate that work is part of life, and not *all* of life. To build the health and vibrancy of our systems, we need to provide regenerative moments for our biggest resource – people.

In practice:

Google have long understood the importance of [bringing joy to the workplace](#), which has been referred to as a playground for grownups. Its central aim is to create the happiest, most productive workplace in the world and encourages team members to bring their pets to work, to enjoy an array of exercise classes, utilise their nap pods, and pursue passion projects.

Ultimately though, perhaps the simplest way to practice Regenerative Leadership is to ask one question with each act or interaction:

“Is what I am doing regenerating this system, or is it depleting and exhausting it?”

Regenerative Business

Models in Action

Some IRL examples of Regenerative Business Models:

patagonia

Patagonia have invested heavily in regenerative agriculture which increases the soils organic matter, creating resilient ecosystems. They aim to revitalise the soil at the same time as producing what is needed.



VivoBarefoot are a footwear company and Certified B Corporation that has a goal “To be on a trajectory to net positive impact on people and planet by formalising and operationalising sustainability culture, policy and processes, effectively making the sustainability team redundant.” Recently they launched the world’s first resale platform, Revivo, with the aim of reducing landfill.

Walmart

Building upon their sustainable practices of recent years, Walmart have announced two key goals: targeting zero emissions by 2040 and restoring 50 million acres of land and one million square miles of ocean.



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