

The Eternal Dance of Altrad



**BUILDING A LASTING LEGACY THROUGH ADAPTABILITY
AND DETERMINATION**





ALTRAD'S ETERNAL DANCE
BUILDING ENDURING LEGACY
THROUGH ADAPTABILITY AND PURPOSE

Altrad's Eternal Dance
Building Enduring Legacy
Through Adaptability and Purpose

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PREFACE

An Invitation to Transform

*We are not merely builders of scaffolding.
We are architects of possibility, sculptors
of human potential, and guardians of a flame
that must outlast us all.*

MOHED ALTRAD

Dear Reader,
What you hold in your hands is more than a business primer—it is an invitation to a profound journey of transformation. This document distils not merely the operational success of the Altrad Group, but the deeper philosophy that has enabled a Bedouin boy from the Syrian desert to build one of the world’s most remarkable industrial organisations. It is a story of metamorphosis, certainly, but more importantly, it is a blueprint for creating something that transcends the temporal boundaries of quarterly reports and market cycles.

As you read these pages, you are not merely absorbing information; you are engaging with a living philosophy that has been tested in the crucible of real world challenges. This is not theoretical leadership—this is leadership forged in the desert heat, tempered by near-bankruptcy, and refined through four decades of continuous evolution. Consider this document your compass for navigating the profound paradox at the heart of all enduring enterprises: how to remain utterly adaptable whilst staying absolutely true to your core.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This text examines the principles and practices that enable organisations to achieve both operational excellence and long-term sustainability. Drawing on the transformation of the Altrad Group from a failing scaffolding manufacturer in 1985 to a global industrial leader, this book presents a framework for managing the fundamental tension between immediate operational demands and strategic development.

The central argument addresses a persistent challenge in organisational leadership: how executives can maintain core principles whilst adapting to changing market conditions.

This paradox is evident throughout management literature, yet practical frameworks for resolving it remain scarce. This text provides such a framework through analysis of proven organisational transformation.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This book introduces two complementary concepts that address organisational adaptability:

- **Principled Flexibility** refers to upholding core values whilst varying implementation methods. Organisations demonstrate this principle when they preserve fundamental commitments, such as worker safety, whilst evolving their operational approaches through technological advancement and process innovation.
- **Dynamic Stability** describes the capacity to maintain organisational identity whilst developing new capabilities. This concept recognises that stability and change need not be opposing forces; rather, foundational stability enables meaningful adaptation.

These concepts build upon established management theory whilst offering practical application methods, tested through four decades of organisational development.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The text comprises six parts, each addressing specific aspects of organisational development:

- **Part I** establishes the theoretical framework, examining how organisations navigate between immediate pressures and strategic objectives. The analysis includes the examination of organisational evolution as continuous adaptation rather than periodic transformation.
- **Part II** details the implementation of principled flexibility and dynamic stability through specific management practices. Case studies demonstrate how organisations maintain core commitments whilst refining operational methods.
- **Part III** presents a three-stage leadership development model adapted from philosophical frameworks for practical application. The stages, termed Camel, Lion, and Child, represent distinct leadership capacities:
 1. The Camel stage develops foundational competencies through deliberate challenge acceptance.
 2. The Lion stage cultivates the ability to challenge existing paradigms constructively.
 3. The Child stage enables creative innovation freed from both conformity and rebellion.
- **Part IV** introduces decision-making frameworks that prioritise long-term value creation. The analysis includes methods for distinguishing between activities that generate temporary attention and those that create lasting organisational capability.
- **Part V** addresses succession planning beyond traditional approaches, focusing on transforming founder-led organisations into self-sustaining institutions. The section examines how personal leadership translates into institutional capability through systematic value embedding and knowledge transfer.
- **Part VI** provides implementation guidance for readers at various organisational levels, from individual contributors to senior executives.

METHODOLOGY AND EVIDENCE

The analysis draws on primary sources from Altrad Group's transformation, including financial records, strategic documents, and leadership communications spanning four decades. The case study method allows detailed examination of principle application across varying market conditions and organisational challenges.

Empirical evidence supports the framework's effectiveness. The Group's progression from near bankruptcy to global market leadership, including the successful integration of over 200 acquisitions, demonstrates the practical application of these principles. The organisation's consistent safety record improvements, from basic compliance in 1985 to industry-leading performance metrics, illustrate principled flexibility in practice.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This text is meant for senior leaders responsible for organisational strategy and development. Readers should possess foundational knowledge of management theory and organisational behaviour. The content assumes familiarity with strategic planning, change management, and leadership development concepts.

Middle managers and emerging leaders will find the leadership development framework particularly relevant, whilst board members and executives will benefit from the analysis of long-term value creation and succession planning.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The text makes three primary contributions to management literature:

First, it provides a practical framework for managing the paradox of stability and change that challenges all organisations. Rather than viewing these as opposing forces, the framework demonstrates their complementary nature.

Second, it offers a developmental model for leadership capability that extends beyond traditional competency frameworks. The three-stage model provides clear progression markers whilst recognising that mature leaders must access all three capacities depending on the circumstances.

Third, it addresses the critical challenge of leadership transition in founder-led organisations. The framework for transforming personal leadership into institutional capability fills a gap in succession planning literature.

PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES

Each chapter includes:

- Learning objectives that specify measurable outcomes
- Case examples drawn from documented organisational experiences
- Assessment criteria for evaluating implementation effectiveness
- Further reading suggestions from relevant management literature

Tables and other visuals throughout the text provide practical tools for immediate application. Also included are decision matrices, assessment instruments, and implementation checklists validated through organisational use.

CONCLUSION: THE ECHO THROUGH ETERNITY

As I stood in that failing factory in 1985, I could not have imagined the full scope of what would unfold. But I understood something fundamental: that every action echoes through eternity, that every choice creates ripples that extend far beyond our ability to see them.

You now stand at your own moment of choice. Perhaps it's not as dramatic as saving a failing company. Perhaps it's as simple as how you'll handle today's difficult conversation, or whether you'll take time to mentor that struggling colleague, or if you'll have the courage to challenge that outdated process.

But make no mistake, these seemingly small choices are the substance of legacy. They are the Camel's burdens that build strength, the Lion's roars that break barriers, the Child's creations that bring joy. They are the traces you leave, the values you embed, the culture you create.

The invitation is simple but profound:

Build well—with craft and competence; build consciously—with intention and awareness; build together—with solidarity and conviviality; build for those who follow—with humility and respect; build as if every action echoes through eternity—with courage and purpose. Because it does.

And in that echo, you'll find not just Altrad's story, but your own—a story worthy of being told and retold, a story that inspires and endures, a story that transforms a moment's choice into an eternal legacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of these concepts reflects contributions from multiple sources. Mohed Altrad's leadership of the organisation provided the empirical foundation for the framework. The management teams across Altrad Group's operations contributed practical insights through their implementation experiences. Academic colleagues provided theoretical grounding and a critical review.

Welcome to the journey. Welcome to the responsibility. Welcome to the possibility. Welcome to building for eternity.

The future is not what will happen to us. The future is what we will create together. And in that creation, we find not just success but significance, not just achievement but meaning, not just a company but a calling.

This is the Altrad way. This is your invitation. This is where your legacy begins.

OVERVIEW

Altrad Seminar 2026: Eternity

BUILDING AN ENDURING LEGACY THROUGH ADAPTABILITY: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When I acquired that nearly bankrupt scaffolding manufacturer in 1985, I was thinking about survival, not eternity. Yet something in that moment spoke to a deeper impulse that has guided our journey ever since. Today, as we mark four decades of growth and transformation, we face a fundamental question: How do we build something that lasts whilst remaining adaptable enough to thrive in constant change?

This seminar explores a certain sense of eternity, not as endless time, but as the aspiration to create lasting significance and timeless impact. Through the lens of Friedrich Nietzsche's three metamorphoses, we examine how individuals and organisations can achieve genuine renewal whilst maintaining their essential character.

Key Concepts

1. **The Camel Stage:** Building strength through accepting worthy challenges and developing resilience
2. **The Lion Stage:** Breaking free from limiting conventions to create new possibilities
3. **The Child Stage:** Creating with a fresh perspective for future generations

Practical Framework: Our approach rests on three pillars

- **Principled Flexibility:** Adapting continuously whilst remaining anchored in unchanging values
- **Dynamic Stability:** Maintaining essential character whilst evolving capabilities
- **Generative Leadership:** Building institutions that serve human needs across generations

Immediate Applications

Every manager can begin by:

- Identifying one area where unnecessary limitations constrain potential
- Choosing one burden that will build future strength
- Approaching one aspect of work with a fresh, creative perspective

The paradox of our time requires us to be both relentlessly adaptable and committed to lasting purpose. This is not about choosing between change and continuity but understanding how each enables the other.

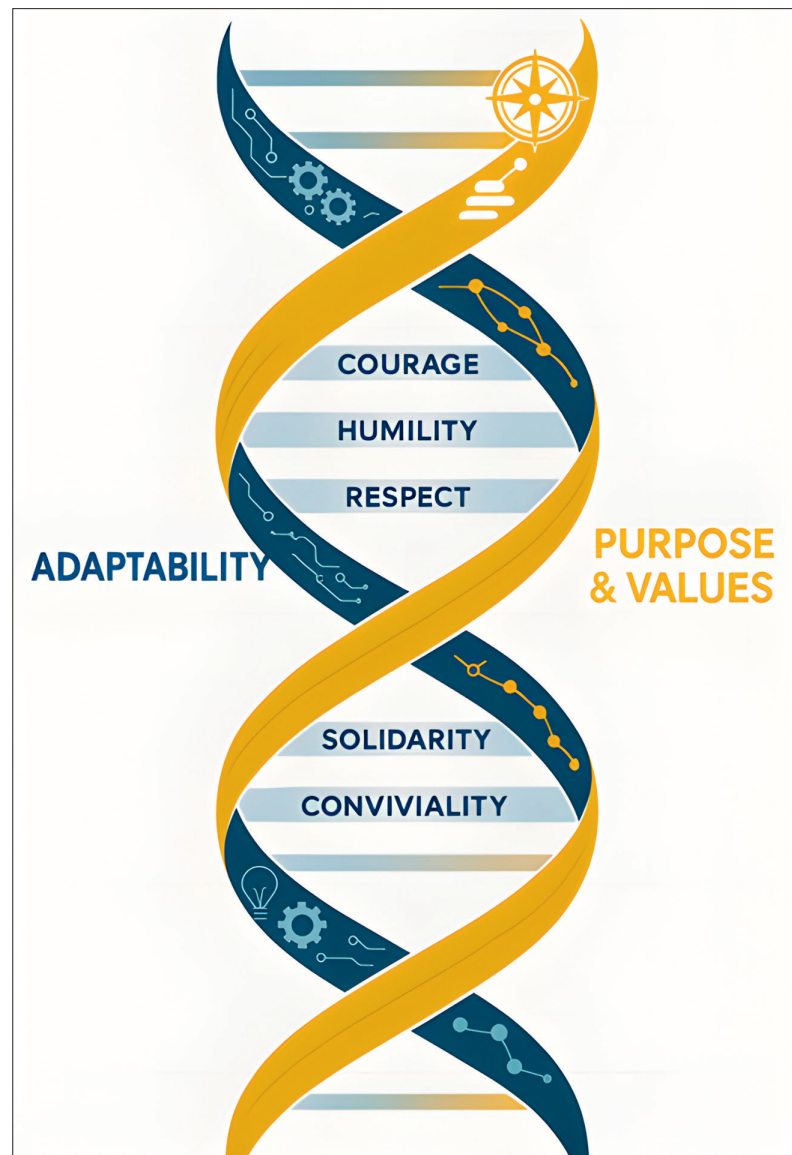


Figure 1: The Double Helix of Altrad

Recommended Themes

For Senior Leaders

- Chapter 1: Understanding Eternity in an organisational context
- Chapter 4: Strategic frameworks for implementation
- Conclusion: Vision for Altrad's future

For Middle Managers

- Chapter 2: Building resilience and leading change
- Chapter 3: Creating lasting impact through daily actions
- Chapter 4: Team mobilisation strategies

For All Employees

- Introduction: Why this matters to everyone
- Chapter 1: Personal meaning and organisational purpose
- Chapter 3: How individual contributions create legacy

Reading Pathways

Time-Pressed Executive (2 hours)

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Chapter conclusions
4. Strategic Imperatives (Chapter 4)
5. Final conclusion

Full Engagement (4 hours)

Complete document in sequence, using reflection questions at section ends

Workshop Format (Multiple sessions)

- Session 1: Introduction and Chapter 1
- Session 2: Chapter 2 (Camel and Lion)
- Session 3: Chapter 3 (Child)
- Session 4: Chapter 4 and action planning



ALTRAD'S ETERNAL DANCE



INTRODUCTION

The Enduring Narrative

THE FOUNDING MOMENT AND ITS DEEPER MEANING

In 1985, I stood before a failing scaffolding company. The smell of rust and old metal filled the air. Thirty-seven worried employees watched my every move, their futures uncertain. The rational analysis was clear: limited assets, significant debts, and outdated equipment. The weight of accumulated debt pressed against any romantic notions about building something lasting. Most would have walked away.

I was thinking about next week's payroll, about whether we could keep the lights on, about the simple arithmetic of survival. Yet something deeper stirred in me in that moment of immediate crisis. Perhaps it was the way one of the older workers showed me a piece of equipment he had maintained for twenty years, his hands still steady despite the uncertainty. Perhaps it was recognising in those faces the same determination I had known growing up in the Syrian desert, where survival taught me that today's struggle could become tomorrow's strength.

I saw not just a struggling business but human potential waiting to be unlocked. This was more than a business decision; it was a choice about the kind of organisation we would build and the values that would guide us. We were not simply rescuing a failing company. We accepted responsibility for something that could outlast us all: an opportunity to demonstrate that principled leadership can transform seemingly hopeless situations.

That founding moment taught me a lesson that still shapes us: the tension between immediate pressures and long-term purpose defines every significant choice we make. We must respond to urgent needs whilst building something meaningful that outlasts any crisis.

→ **Managerial Implication:** When facing difficult decisions, ask yourself: "What would this choice look like if we had to live with its consequences for decades?" This long-term perspective often reveals options invisible to short-term thinking.

FOUR DECADES OF TRANSFORMATION

Today, Altrad spans continents and industries, employing thousands where we once employed dozens. We have weathered financial crises, integrated dozens of acquisitions, and most recently, navigated a global pandemic that challenged every assumption about business operations. Through each transformation, something essential has remained constant: our spirit, our values, our approach to challenges.

This consistency through change offers a vital lesson. Organisations that survive and thrive maintain core values whilst adapting their operating models. Growth and diversification need not dilute organisational identity when managed with conscious intention.

Consider how we entered new markets. Each expansion required adapting to local conditions whilst maintaining our fundamental commitments to safety, quality, and human development. We learned that success comes not from imposing rigid uniformity but from translating core principles into locally relevant practices.

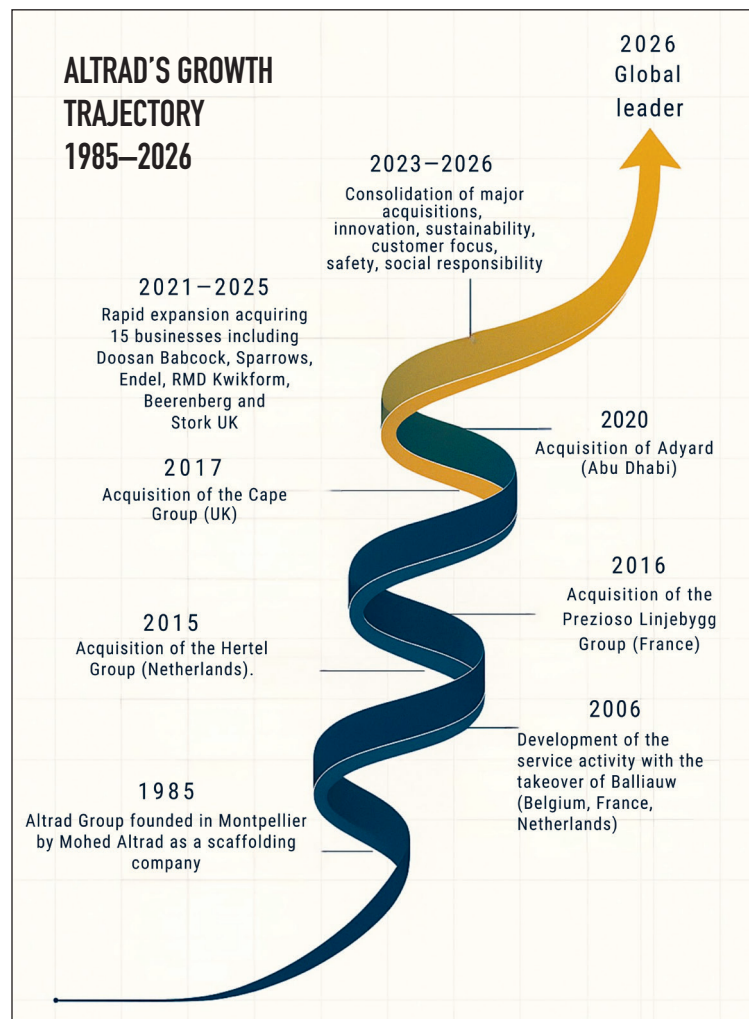


Figure 2: Altrad's Growth Trajectory

→ **Managerial Implication:** Document and share stories of how your team has maintained values through change. These narratives provide practical guidance for future challenges and build confidence that adaptation need not mean abandoning identity.

DEFINING ETERNITY IN PRACTICAL TERMS

Let me be clear about what I mean by eternity. I do not speak of endless time or corporate immortality. Instead, I refer to the aspiration to create lasting significance, to build something whose positive impact transcends immediate circumstances and continues serving human needs across generations.

In business terms, eternity translates to building institutions whose purpose and values outlast leadership changes, economic cycles, and technological disruption. It means creating organisational cultures deeply embedded in structures, practices, and collective memory that guide decision-making across decades.

This understanding transforms how we approach improvement initiatives. Rather than pursuing change for its own sake, we evaluate each modification against its contribution to lasting institutional strength. We ask not just “Will this work?” but “Will this endure?”

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an unexpected test of this principle. Organisations focused solely on short-term survival often emerged weakened. Those who used the crisis to strengthen fundamental capabilities whilst maintaining commitments to stakeholders emerged stronger. We chose the latter path, investing in our people even when revenues fell, knowing that organisational strength rests on human capability.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create a simple test for significant decisions: Does this strengthen our ability to serve stakeholders over the long term? If the answer is unclear, gather more information before proceeding.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMATION

My understanding of organisational transformation draws from Friedrich Nietzsche's profound insight into human development: the three metamorphoses of the spirit. These stages provide practical guidance for how individuals and organisations can achieve genuine renewal whilst maintaining essential character.

The Camel accepts burdens and builds resilience through discipline. In organisational terms, this represents establishing operational excellence and proving reliability. Every business must master this stage, developing the strength to deliver consistently even under pressure.

The Lion breaks from convention and asserts new possibilities through courage. This mirrors the phase when companies challenge industry assumptions and create new market positions. Innovation requires this spirit of constructive rebellion.

The Child creates fresh beginnings through innocence and play. This final stage represents mature organisations that innovate freely whilst maintaining deep wisdom. They build for the future with joy rather than through obligation.



Figure 3: Friedrich Nietzsche's Stages of Development

These are not merely philosophical concepts but practical stages every leader and organisation must navigate. Identifying your team's current stage helps align your leadership approach and strategic priorities.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Assess your team's current stage. Are you building foundational strength (Camel), challenging limitations (Lion), or creating freely (Child)? Adjust your leadership style to support the appropriate development.

BUILDING ON PREVIOUS LEARNING

Our journey toward understanding eternity builds on the foundations laid in previous texts and seminars. In 2023, "Optimism in Business" taught us to maintain a positive vision amid uncertainty. In 2024, "Surpassing Oneself" emphasised the importance of continuous personal and organisational growth. In 2025, "Unearthing Our Past" reconnected us with our foundational story and values.

Now we synthesise these lessons: optimism provides the energy for transformation, ambition to surpass ourselves drives continuous improvement, and understanding our past grounds us for the future. Eternity represents the culmination where past, present, and future align in purposeful action.

This progression reflects a deliberate developmental sequence. Just as individual learning builds upon previous understanding, organisational capability develops through staged advancement. Each seminar has prepared us for this moment of integration.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Review your team's development over the past few years. Identify lessons learned and capabilities built. Use this foundation to plan the next stages of growth rather than starting fresh with each initiative.

THE NATURE OF LEGACY

Building a legacy requires understanding what truly endures. Physical assets depreciate. Technologies become obsolete. Market positions shift. What lasts are the capabilities we develop in people, the trust we build with stakeholders, and the positive changes we create in communities.

The desert taught me that survival requires both deep roots and flexibility. A tree that cannot bend breaks in the storm. A tree without roots cannot weather any storm at all. Organisations need what I call “dynamic stability”: the capacity to remain essentially themselves whilst continuously becoming more capable.

This paradox appears throughout business. We must standardise for efficiency whilst customising for clients. We must reduce costs whilst investing in capabilities. We must deliver quarterly results whilst building for the long term. Success comes not from choosing one side but from managing the tension creatively.

Legacy emerges from how we handle these paradoxes daily. Every interaction either builds or erodes trust. Every decision either strengthens or weakens culture. Every project either develops or wastes human potential. The accumulation of these moments creates organisational character that endures beyond any individual tenure.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Identify the key paradoxes in your area of responsibility. Rather than viewing them as problems to solve, see them as creative tensions to manage. Excellence often emerges from balancing opposing demands rather than eliminating them.

RECONCILING OPPOSING FORCES

The central challenge of our time involves reconciling relentless adaptability with the quest for permanence. Markets evolve rapidly. Technologies transform industries overnight. Yet humans need stability, meaning, and connection to purposes larger than immediate tasks.

This reconciliation requires what I call “principled flexibility”. We change everything except what must not be changed. We adapt every method whilst preserving the essential purpose. We evolve continuously whilst remaining ourselves.

Consider how we approach safety. Methods and technologies for protecting workers evolve constantly. New equipment, digital monitoring, and predictive analytics all enhance our capabilities. Yet the fundamental commitment to sending every worker home safely remains absolute. We embrace new approaches that serve this unchanging purpose.

The same principle applies across our operations. As customer needs evolve, our services adapt. As market conditions shift, our strategies adjust. But our commitment to creating value for all stakeholders remains constant. This clarity about what changes and what endures enables confident decision-making even in the face of uncertainty.

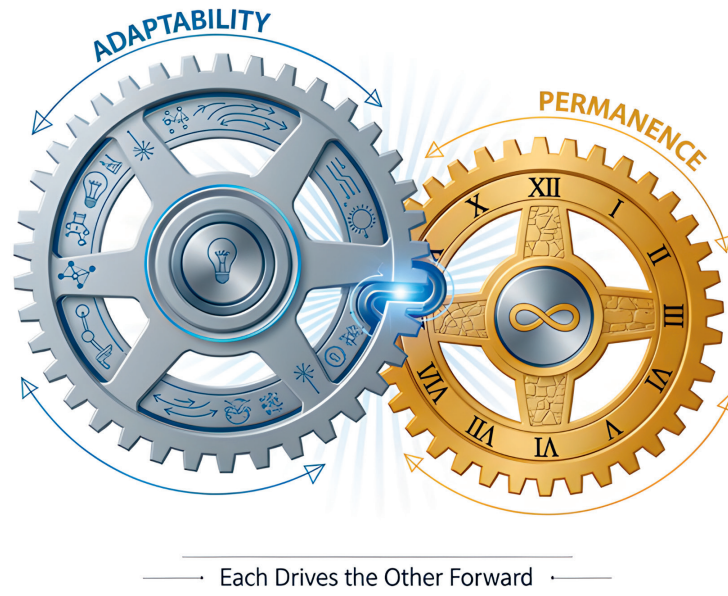


Figure 4: The Paradox Resolved

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create two lists for your department: “What must never change” (values, fundamental commitments) and “What must continuously evolve” (methods, technologies, processes). Use these lists to guide decisions about innovation and improvement.

THE PRACTICAL NECESSITY OF THIS EXPLORATION

This exploration of eternity addresses practical necessities, not philosophical luxury. In a world where competitive advantages erode quickly and disruption threatens established players, only organisations with a clear purpose and adaptive capability survive long term.

Consider the companies that dominated their industries twenty years ago. Many no longer exist or have become shadows of their former selves. They failed not from lack of resources or intelligence but from an inability to maintain their identity whilst adapting to change. They either clung too tightly to outdated methods or abandoned their essence in a desperate pursuit of trends.

We face the same risks. Success creates comfort. Comfort breeds complacency. Complacency invites fracture. Only by consciously cultivating both stability and adaptability can we avoid this cycle.

Every manager reading this encounters these challenges daily. How do you maintain team stability while driving necessary change? How do you preserve institutional knowledge while introducing fresh perspectives? How do you deliver results today while also planning for tomorrow?

These questions have no simple answers, but exploring them together strengthens our collective capacity to navigate paradox. What follows are frameworks, examples, and

tools drawn from our collective experience. They represent not prescriptions but invitations to think more deeply about the intersection of change and continuity in your sphere of responsibility.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Schedule regular discussions with your team about balancing stability and change. Establish a safe environment where people can express concerns about either too much change or too much stasis. Use these conversations to calibrate your approach.



CHAPTER 1

The Enduring Journey Begins

WHAT IS ETERNITY?

When I speak of eternity to our managers, I see various reactions. Some think of religious concepts. Others imagine corporate monuments. Few grasp immediately what I mean: the profound human need to create something meaningful that outlasts our direct involvement.

Eternity, in our context, serves as a guiding metaphor rather than referring to endless time. It represents our aspiration to achieve enduring significance through values and contributions that remain relevant across generations. Just as a master craftsman's techniques are passed on to apprentices who adapt them for new challenges, organisational eternity involves transmitting essential wisdom whilst enabling continuous evolution.

This concept addresses fundamental questions every thoughtful leader faces. What remains when market conditions change? What survives leadership transitions? What transcends technological disruption? The answer lies not in specific products or processes but in the underlying patterns of thought and action that define organisational character.

During our rapid expansion into Middle Eastern markets, we faced this challenge directly. Local competitors knew their markets intimately. International competitors brought massive resources. Our

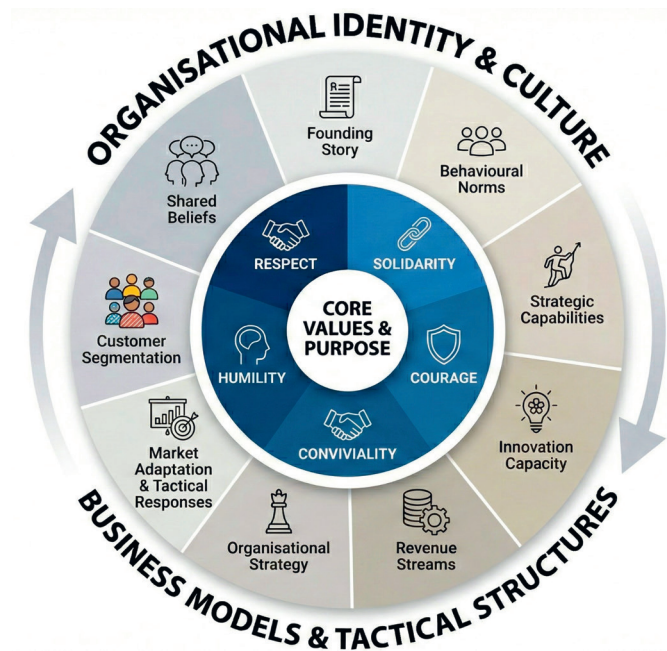


Figure 5: Defining Eternity in a Business Context

advantage lay in something less tangible but more durable: a consistent approach to developing human potential and building trust that transcended cultural boundaries.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Identify what aspects of your team's work would remain valuable even if your industry transformed completely. These transferable capabilities and values represent your contribution to organisational eternity.

BRIEF PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF ETERNITY

Understanding eternity benefits from acknowledging its philosophical heritage. Ancient Greek philosophers distinguished between *chronos* (sequential time) and *kairos* (meaningful time). Chronos marks the passage of minutes and hours. Kairos represents moments when decisions take on lasting significance.

Leaders operating with an eternal perspective focus on kairos. They recognise certain moments when choices establish patterns that endure. The decision to maintain safety standards despite schedule pressure creates precedent. The choice to develop rather than to replace an underperforming employee builds culture. These moments of kairos shape an organisation's character more than routine chronological activities.

Marcus Aurelius, writing as both philosopher and emperor, understood this deeply. His *Meditations* repeatedly emphasise acting in accordance with timeless principles whilst engaging fully with temporal responsibilities. "Confine yourself to the present", he advised, whilst simultaneously urging attention to eternal values that provide context for present action.

This apparent paradox resolves when we understand that present excellence serves eternal purposes. When we perform today's tasks with a commitment to lasting values, we create what endures. The accumulated effect of principled daily actions builds institutional character that outlasts any individual.

Eastern philosophical traditions offer complementary insights. The Hindu idea of dharma suggests that both people and organisations have a rightful path. This path serves the greater good while showcasing their unique abilities. On the other hand, Buddhism teaches about impermanence. It highlights that specific forms are temporary. This understanding encourages a focus on lasting principles that go beyond any one form.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Before major decisions, pause to consider whether you are in a moment of kairos. Will this choice establish patterns that others will follow? If so, ensure your decision reflects the values and approach you want to perpetuate.

EXPLORING THE PERSONAL LONGING FOR LASTING IMPACT

Every person I have worked with, from apprentice scaffolders to senior executives, shares a common desire: to matter, to contribute something that outlasts their direct involvement. This longing reflects a fundamental human trait that wise leaders understand and channel constructively.

Psychologist Erik Erikson identified generativity as a crucial stage of adult development. This represents our need to nurture and create things that outlast individual lives. In organisations, this manifests as mentoring, system building, and culture development. The most fulfilled employees are those who see their work contributing to something greater than personal success.

I learned this personally on my journey from the Syrian desert to international business. Initially, I focused on individual achievement and financial success. But satisfaction came not from personal wealth accumulation. It came from creating opportunities for others. Each person we employ, each community we serve, each innovation we pioneer represents a form of immortality through positive impact.

This understanding transforms how we approach daily challenges. When facing difficult decisions, we can ask: “What would I want my professional legacy to be?” This question cuts through short-term pressures to reveal what truly matters. It connects today’s efforts to tomorrow’s impact.

Cultural anthropologists speak of symbolic immortality through various means: biological (children), creative (innovations), natural (environmental protection), and institutional (organisations that embody values). Business leaders can create multiple forms simultaneously. We build literal structures that shelter human activity. We develop people who carry forward capabilities and values. We establish systems that function beyond our tenure.

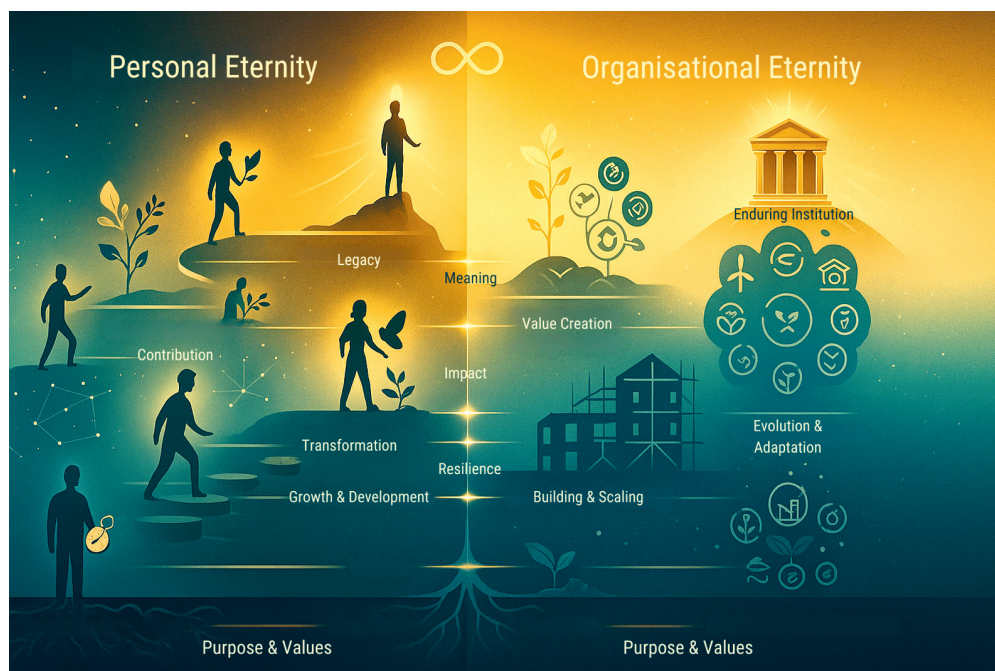


Figure 6: Personal and Organisational Eternity

→ **Managerial Implication:** Facilitate conversations with team members about their desired professional legacy. Help them connect daily tasks to lasting contributions. This alignment between personal meaning and organisational purpose drives exceptional performance.

THE ORGANISATIONAL QUEST FOR ENDURING IDENTITY

Just as individuals seek lasting significance, organisations require a coherent identity that transcends leaders and market conditions. Our identity is defined by distinctive attributes that shape our organisation's character across time and circumstances.

Organisational identity includes explicit elements such as mission and values statements. More importantly, it encompasses implicit patterns of decision-making, resource allocation, and stakeholder relationships, revealing true priorities. What we do consistently matters more than what we say occasionally.

Research by James Collins and Jerry Porras identified companies that consistently perform well over decades, even amid significant environmental changes. These visionary companies share key characteristics: they maintain a core ideology while fostering progress, create a culture that attracts individuals aligned with their values, and emphasise institutional capability instead of relying on specific leaders.

The challenge lies in distinguishing what must remain constant from what must evolve. Core values and fundamental purpose provide stability. Strategies, structures, and practices adapt to circumstances. Leaders who confuse these categories become either rigid or rudderless.

Altrad's journey toward establishing a lasting identity has gone through several distinct phases. In the early years, our identity was closely linked to my personal vision and leadership style. While this approach provided clarity and motivation, it also introduced some vulnerability. As time passed, we made a concerted effort to embed our core principles into our systems, processes, and institutional memory, allowing the organisation to function independently of any one individual.

Our five core values—courage, humility, respect, solidarity, and conviviality—now guide decisions throughout the organisation. These are not abstract aspirations but practical principles shaping how we approach acquisitions, develop talent, serve customers, and engage communities. They provide continuity as strategies evolve.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Assess whether your team's decisions consistently reflect stated values. If gaps exist, address them through discussion and adjusted practices rather than simply repeating value statements. Actions that demonstrate values are more powerful than words.

ALTRAD'S FOUNDING STORY AS A CASE STUDY FOR ETERNITY

Our 1985 acquisition of that struggling scaffolding manufacturer provides a concrete example of how eternal thinking guides immediate decisions and establishes enduring patterns. Examining this founding moment reveals principles still shaping our approach today.

The conventional analysis showed little promise. With limited assets, considerable debts, outdated equipment, and a demoralised workforce, the outlook suggested

abandoning the venture. However, I recognised the potential to demonstrate that principled leadership could transform these challenges into a foundation for success.

This decision reflected eternal thinking. Rather than focusing solely on financial projections, I considered what organisation we might build by approaching challenges with a long-term perspective and unwavering commitment to human potential. This shift in timeframe completely changed the evaluation.

Instead of seeing thirty-seven worried employees, we saw accumulated knowledge and relationships waiting for better leadership. Instead of dismissing obsolete equipment, we saw foundations for systematic improvement. Instead of fearing market challenges, we saw opportunities to serve customer needs more effectively than complacent competitors.

Transformation required immediate action guided by eternal principles. We stabilised finances, upgraded equipment, and engaged every employee in understanding how individual contributions are connected to the broader vision. We established patterns of communication, decision-making, and continuous improvement that remain central today.

What made this founding moment exemplify eternity was not the specific strategies employed. Those have evolved significantly. Instead, principles guiding our approach proved timeless. We demonstrated that combining a long-term perspective with immediate action generates invisible possibilities. We showed that investing in people creates sustainable advantages. We proved that maintaining values whilst adapting tactics enables both principled behaviour and practical success.

These lessons continue to guide us through new challenges. When evaluating acquisitions, we consider not only current performance but also the underlying capabilities that can be improved through different leadership. When we encounter difficulties, we apply the same combination of immediate action and long-term investment that helped us overcome our initial challenges.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Study your organisation's founding stories or the early challenges it overcame. Extract principles that enabled success. Apply these proven approaches to current challenges whilst adapting specific methods to contemporary contexts.



CHAPTER 2

The Metamorphosis of Strength

THE CAMEL'S PATH: FORGING FOUNDATIONS

Nietzsche's first metamorphosis speaks directly to the foundational work every organisation must undertake. The Camel represents our capacity to bear burdens, accept discipline, and build strength through conscious engagement with difficulty. This is not passive endurance but an active choice to develop capabilities through challenge.

In my early years, I embodied the Camel without knowing the metaphor. Growing up in the Syrian desert meant accepting harsh realities whilst maintaining hope for a better future. Studying in France required adapting to a foreign culture whilst preserving my core identity. Building a business from near bankruptcy demanded accepting market disciplines whilst believing in eventual success.

The Camel asks: "What is difficult? What challenges will make me stronger?" This spirit actively seeks meaningful burdens, understanding that strength emerges from engagement with worthy difficulties. For organisations, this means choosing constraints and challenges that develop essential capabilities.

When we entered the nuclear sector, we accepted burdens others avoided. Regulatory requirements were stringent. Safety standards were exacting. Profit margins were thin. Yet we recognised that mastering these challenges would build capabilities that would serve us across industries. The discipline required for nuclear work elevated our entire operation.

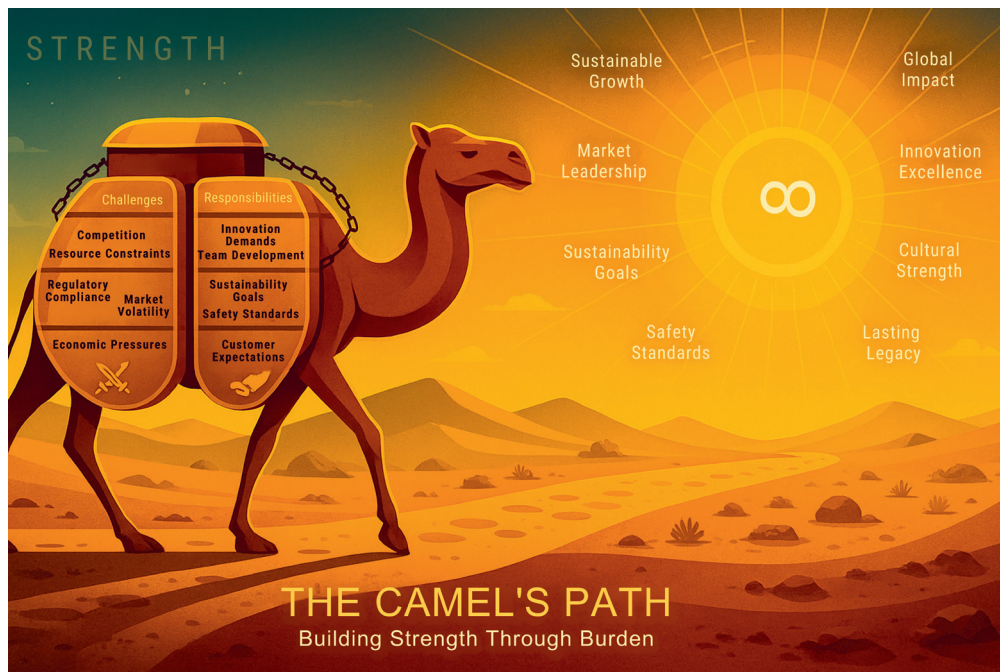


Figure 7: The Camel's Path

→ **Managerial Implication:** Identify the most demanding standards in your industry or adjacent sectors. Voluntarily adopt these higher standards before regulation requires them. The capabilities developed through voluntary constraint become competitive advantages.

ACCEPTING BURDENS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

The Camel stage teaches that resilience comes from conscious acceptance of meaningful challenges rather than from avoiding difficulty. This wisdom applies equally to individuals developing careers and organisations building market positions.

In our early years, success depended more on discipline than brilliance. We accepted serving customers in industries where margins were thin and expectations high. We took on continuous improvement in operations, where small efficiencies accumulated into significant advantages. We took on the responsibility of training people whereas others saw only costs.

This acceptance was strategic rather than masochistic. By willingly embracing each challenge, we strengthened our ability to handle future difficulties. The rigorous demands of scaffolding taught us precision and reliability, which proved valuable during expansion. Financial constraints encouraged efficiency and resourcefulness—qualities that remain competitive advantages today.

The Stoic philosophers had a deep understanding of a key principle: troubles arise not from the things themselves, but from our judgement about them. Epictetus, for example,

emphasised this idea. The Camel embodies this wisdom by choosing positive attitudes toward necessary challenges, effectively turning obstacles into opportunities for growth.

Building resilience involves recognising which burdens are productive and which are destructive. The Camel embraces challenges that foster capability, character, and wisdom, while avoiding those that simply drain energy. This ability to discern reflects sophisticated judgement rather than mere endurance.

During the 2008 financial crisis, we demonstrated Camel resilience. Rather than viewing market contraction as purely negative, we asked what capabilities we could develop during the downturn. We accelerated training programmes, knowing skilled workers would be scarce during the recovery. We strengthened customer relationships through reliable service when competitors cut corners. We used the crisis to prove our values were genuine, not fair-weather conveniences.

→ **Managerial Implication:** List current challenges facing your team. Categorise them as either capability-building or merely draining. Focus energy on transforming the former into development opportunities whilst minimising the impact of the latter.

Stoicism and Response to Adversity

The Camel's approach to adversity draws from Stoic philosophy, which teaches that whilst we cannot control external events, we always control our responses. This perspective transforms adversity from a burden into an opportunity for demonstrating character.

Marcus Aurelius wrote: "You have power over your mind, not outside events. Realise this, and you will find strength". The Camel embodies this by focusing energy on factors within its control whilst accepting external circumstances with equanimity. This is not passive resignation but an active choice about where to direct efforts.

In business contexts, the Stoic approach means distinguishing clearly between market conditions we must accept and organisational responses we control. Economic downturns, regulatory changes, and competitive pressures are external realities that wise leaders acknowledge without allowing them to determine internal responses.

Consider how we approached the COVID-19 pandemic. We could not control the virus, government restrictions, or market disruptions. We could control our safety protocols, employee communication, and customer support. By focusing on what we could influence rather than lamenting what we could not, we maintained morale and operational effectiveness.

This Stoic discipline also applies to personal leadership development. Every leader encounters setbacks, criticism, and failures. The Camel stage teaches us to view these experiences as opportunities for growth instead of problems to endure. What can we learn? How can criticism help us improve? What strengths develop through this challenge?

Creating systems for learning from adversity proves more valuable than simply responding to it. After each significant challenge, we conduct systematic reviews asking specific questions. What worked well? What could improve? What capabilities need development? How can we better prepare? The goal ensures difficulties contribute to growth rather than merely consuming resources.

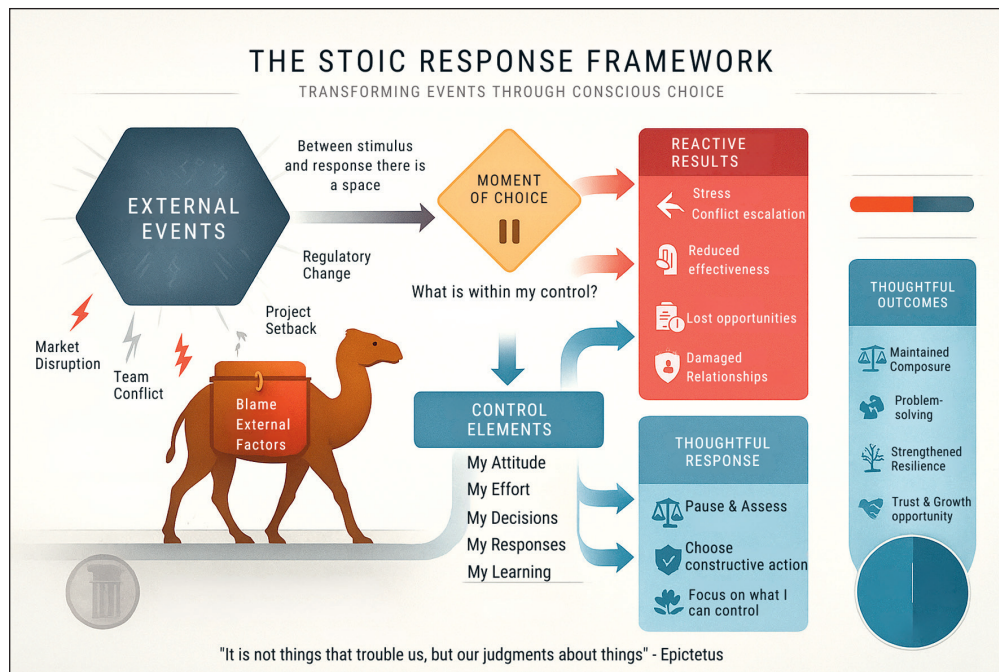


Figure 8: The Stoic Response Framework

→ **Managerial Implication:** Develop a standard protocol for responding to setbacks. Include immediate stabilisation actions, learning extraction processes, and capability development plans. This transforms crisis management into organisational development.

Altrad's Desert Moments and Resilience

The desert metaphor carries special meaning for understanding how adversity shapes character and builds foundations for achievement. My childhood in the Syrian desert taught me lessons in resilience that continue to influence our approach to challenges.

Desert survival depends not on controlling circumstances but on responding wisely. Water scarcity teaches conservation and appreciation. Temporary shelter teaches quick adaptation. Resource limitations teach maximum usage. The desert provides harsh but honest feedback about what works.

These lessons shaped Altrad's early years when resources were limited and conditions were challenging. Like desert travellers, we learned efficient movement, the careful use of resources, and the ability to maintain direction despite uncertain paths. We developed discipline focusing on essential activities whilst avoiding energy waste on attractive but non-essential pursuits.

The near bankruptcy of our first acquisition represented a classic desert moment. Circumstances appeared threatening but provided opportunities to develop capabilities that served us well later. For example, financial constraints forced extraordinary operational efficiency. Sceptical markets demanded proven value through performance. Small teams meant everyone contributed at the highest levels.

These desert moments taught us that organisations need to develop deep root systems when surface conditions are challenging. Difficulties forced us to identify and strengthen core capabilities that would support future growth. We learned to distinguish between activities that create genuine value and those that merely consume resources.

This experience prepared us for later challenges. During industry downturns, we responded quickly because we had systems for operating under constraints. Careful management, clear communication, and focused attention on essential activities served well when conditions required rapid adaptation.

The desert also taught us patience and persistence. Conditions change gradually. Success requires sustained effort over extended periods. We learned to celebrate progress whilst maintaining realistic timeline expectations. Quick fixes are rare; sustainable improvement requires consistent application of principles over time.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Identify your team's "desert moments"—times of significant constraint or challenge. Extract lessons learned and capabilities developed. Share these stories to build confidence that current difficulties can similarly strengthen the organisation.

The Role of Patience, Commitment, and Trust

The Camel stage cultivates three qualities that make all future achievements possible: patience in maintaining effort over extended periods, commitment to worthy purposes regardless of immediate rewards, and trust in human potential despite current limitations.

Patience in this context refers to active persistence paired with realistic timelines rather than passive waiting. True patience acknowledges that significant accomplishments require sustained effort and that progress is achieved through the gradual accumulation of small improvements rather than dramatic breakthroughs. The Camel embodies daily discipline in the pursuit of excellence while maintaining confidence in future success.

In business contexts, patience manifests as a willingness to invest in capabilities that produce returns over years rather than quarters. When acquiring companies, we plan integration timelines extending beyond immediate financial pressures. This allows us to focus on building sustainable advantages rather than merely cost-cutting to boost profits.

Commitment involves making decisions that persist despite temporary setbacks or alternative opportunities. The Camel consciously chooses burdens and maintains dedication through changing circumstances. This reflects intelligent persistence guided by clear values and long-term objectives rather than blind stubbornness.

Our commitment to developing human potential exemplifies this principle. Even during difficult financial periods, we continue investing in training and development because these investments create individual fulfilment and organisational strength. This commitment gets tested when short-term pressures call for reducing expenditures, but maintaining investment creates competitive advantages that justify the costs.

Trust is arguably the most essential quality developed during the Camel stage. This involves having confidence in one's own abilities to tackle challenges, believing in others' potential for growth, and trusting in ongoing efforts guided by solid principles. Without this foundation of trust, neither patience nor commitment can be sustained over time.

The Trust-Patience-Commitment Triangle The Camel Stage - Developing the Foundation for All Later Achievements

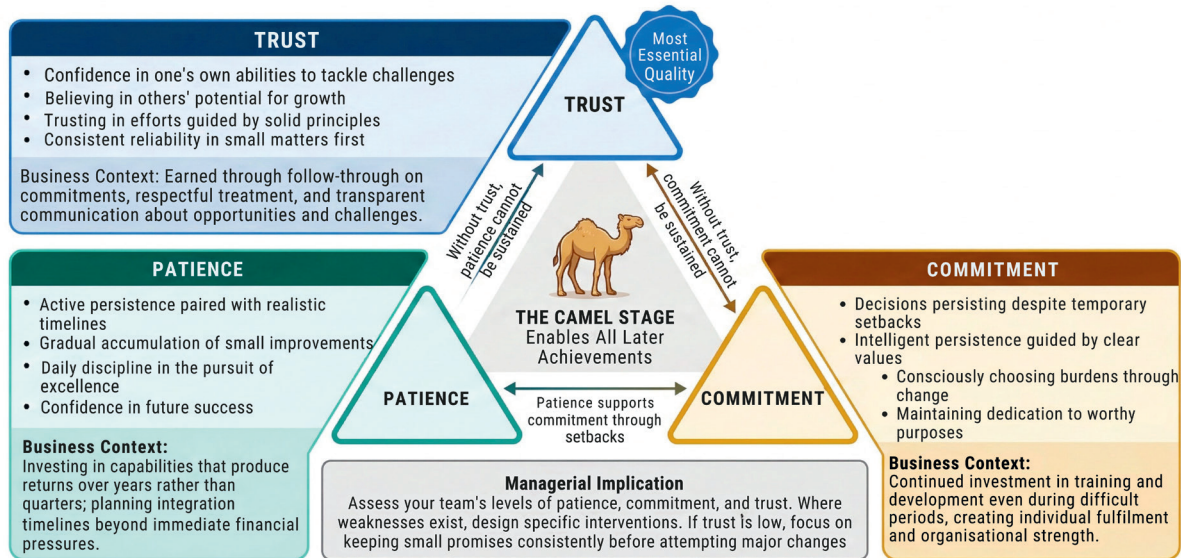


Figure 9: The Trust-Patience-Commitment Triangle

Building trust requires consistently demonstrating reliability in small matters before expecting confidence in larger ones. We earn employee trust by following through on commitments, treating people respectfully regardless of position, and maintaining transparent communication about opportunities and challenges.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Assess your team's levels of patience, commitment, and trust. Where weaknesses exist, design specific interventions. For example, if trust is low, focus on keeping small promises consistently before attempting major changes.

THE LION'S ROAR: DARING TO TRANSFORM

Nietzsche's second metamorphosis represents the spirit's awakening to its own power and determination to create new possibilities. Where the Camel accepted burdens willingly, the Lion challenges authority and breaks free from limitations that no longer serve growth. This transformation marked a crucial phase in both my personal journey and Altrad's evolution.

The Lion declares, "I will" in opposition to the "thou shalt" of convention. This represents not destructive rebellion but creative assertion. When I first challenged the assumption that a small scaffolding company could not compete internationally, I embodied the spirit of the Lion. The industry said, "thou shalt remain local". We said, "we will expand globally".

This metamorphosis requires courage because it means taking responsibility for outcomes rather than following established patterns. When we decided to transform from

an equipment manufacturer to a comprehensive service provider, we challenged decades of industry divide between making and doing. The Lion recognises that breakthroughs require breaking through.

Understanding when to shift from Camel to Lion thinking is crucial. The Camel builds strength through accepting necessary constraints. The Lion recognises when those constraints become unnecessary limitations. Both stages serve essential purposes in organisational development.



Figure 10: The Lion's Transformation

→ **Managerial Implication:** Examine the rules and limitations your team accepts as given. Question whether each serves current purposes or merely reflects historical precedent. Create safe spaces for challenging outdated assumptions constructively.

Breaking Chains and Self-Affirmation

The Lion's primary work involves identifying invisible chains that prevent organisations and individuals from achieving their full potential. These chains often appear as "industry standards" or "best practices" that once served useful purposes but now constrain necessary evolution.

Breaking chains requires first recognising their existence. Many limitations become so familiar that we accept them as natural laws rather than human conventions. The Lion develops the ability to see past apparent necessity to the underlying choice. Why do we operate this way? Who benefits from the current arrangements? What possibilities emerge if we approach things differently?

When expanding beyond our original scaffolding focus, we confronted several industry chains. Traditional thinking suggested companies should specialise deeply in narrow segments. We chose to develop broad capabilities serving multiple customer needs. This required challenging conventional wisdom whilst developing new management approaches.

Self-affirmation in the Lion stage means claiming rights to operate according to your own values rather than external validation. This requires deep confidence in capabilities and a clear understanding of purpose. The Lion says, “I will”, not from arrogance but from accurate strength assessment and legitimate aspirations.

For Altrad, self-affirmation involves consistently prioritising long-term value creation over short-term optimisation when the two are at odds. We uphold our rights and operate according to our values, even when market pressures may suggest otherwise. This commitment to self-affirmation fosters the psychological space needed for innovation and authentic leadership.

The process requires what I term “constructive rebellion”: challenging existing arrangements from a creative vision for better possibilities, rather than from destructive impulses. The Lion rebels for higher purposes, not merely to assert independence.



Figure 11: Breaking the Chains Framework

→ **Managerial Implication:** Facilitate team discussions about “sacred cows”—practices everyone assumes must continue. Evaluate each against current strategic needs. Often, yesterday’s breakthroughs become today’s barriers.

The Courage to Build and Reinvent

The Lion's courage extends beyond breaking constraints to actively constructing new possibilities. This sophisticated courage combines creative vision with practical execution, revolutionary thinking with constructive implementation.

Building requires a different kind of courage than breaking. Breaking challenges existing structures and conventional thinking. Building means taking responsibility for creating better alternatives and proving effectiveness through sustained effort. The Lion's "I will" must be backed by capability and commitment to follow through.

In our experience, building courage has manifested in key decisions requiring us to bet the company's future on our ability to create new capabilities. Expanding internationally meant building operations where we had no relationships or knowledge. Diversifying into complementary industries required developing expertise in unproven areas.

Each decision represented the Lion's courage. We asserted our capability to succeed in new territories based on confidence in our values and methods rather than guaranteed outcomes. We said, "I will", where others said, "thou shalt not", based on conventional wisdom.

Courage to reinvent applies to both strategy and culture. As markets evolve and new generations join, we must continuously update approaches whilst maintaining core values.

Changing methods whilst preserving essence requires delicate balance—exactly the sophisticated judgement Lions develop.

Reinvention requires the courage to abandon successful approaches when they no longer serve emerging realities. What brought success to date may not enable further achievements. The Lion displays the strength to let go of comfortable patterns when they become limitations.

Our digital transformation exemplifies this courage. We built success through personal relationships and manual processes. Recognising that digital technologies could enhance rather than replace human connections required courage to invest heavily whilst maintaining our people-first philosophy.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Identify one area where past success might limit future growth. Design experiments testing new approaches whilst maintaining safety nets. Courage means taking calculated risks, not reckless gambles.

Altrad's Strategic Shifts

Our evolution from scaffolding manufacturer to diversified industrial group illustrates the spirit of the Lion in action. Each major shift required challenging conventional thinking about boundaries whilst building new approaches serving emerging realities.

As mentioned earlier, the first shift involved expanding from equipment manufacturing to providing comprehensive access services. Industry wisdom suggested manufacturers should focus on production whilst leaving service delivery to specialised contractors. We challenged this division by developing integrated capabilities serving customers more effectively.

This shift required breaking from several conventional lines of thinking. We challenged the assumption that manufacturing and services require fundamentally different

capabilities. We overcame customer expectations about separate suppliers. We developed new systems to manage complex relationships.

The second shift involved expansion beyond our French market. This challenged assumptions about the necessity of local ownership and the importance of deep cultural knowledge for success. We chose to believe that strong values, excellent service, and a commitment to local employment could overcome established competitor advantages.

Each expansion represented a Lion moment. We demonstrated our ability to succeed in new territories based on confidence in our approach rather than detailed local knowledge. We learned to adapt our methods to meet local requirements while maintaining the essential values and standards that define our identity.

The third shift involved diversifying into adjacent industries where core capabilities created value. Rather than remaining narrowly focused, we expanded into related areas such as industrial maintenance and energy services. This challenged conventional wisdom about the benefits of strict focus.

These shifts highlight the principles of Lion leadership. First, making groundbreaking progress often involves challenging the conventional practices of the industry that restrict innovative thinking. Second, confidence should be built on a sound assessment of transferable capabilities, rather than relying on guaranteed outcomes. Lastly, successful reinvention requires preserving one's core identity while adapting methods.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Map your industry's unwritten rules and conventional wisdom. Identify which genuinely serve customers versus which merely preserve existing player positions. Focus innovation on breaking the latter.

Courage in Action and Existentialism

The Lion's courage finds philosophical grounding in existentialist thought, particularly Jean-Paul Sartre's insight that humans are "condemned to be free" and must take full responsibility for their choices. This perspective transforms courage from emotional impulse into deliberate engagement with fundamental uncertainties.

Existentialism teaches that we create ourselves through choices and actions. No predetermined essence defines what we must become. This places enormous responsibility on decisions whilst creating vast possibilities for authentic achievement. The Lion embraces this responsibility, understanding that freedom means accepting the anxiety that accompanies genuine choice.

In leadership contexts, the existentialist perspective means taking full ownership of decisions rather than hiding behind authorities or conventions. When making strategic choices, we cannot solely rely on best practices or consultant recommendations. We must seriously consider our specific circumstances and make decisions based on our values and judgement.

This approach shaped our pandemic response when conventional guidance was limited and circumstances were rapidly changing. Rather than waiting for clear direction, we took responsibility for developing responses based on our understanding of stakeholder needs. This required courage, acting with incomplete information, and accepting responsibility for the outcome.

The existentialist dimension also applies to organisational culture and development. Rather than imposing rigid systems that treat people as interchangeable resources, we

create conditions where individuals take responsibility for development and contribution. This requires courage from everyone—leaders trusting employees to make good choices, and employees accepting performance responsibility.

Sartre's concept of "bad faith" warns against denying our freedom by pretending that our circumstances determine our choices. The Lion refuses to succumb to bad faith, acknowledging its power to choose its responses regardless of external pressures. This means taking responsibility for how we react to constraints, rather than ignoring them.

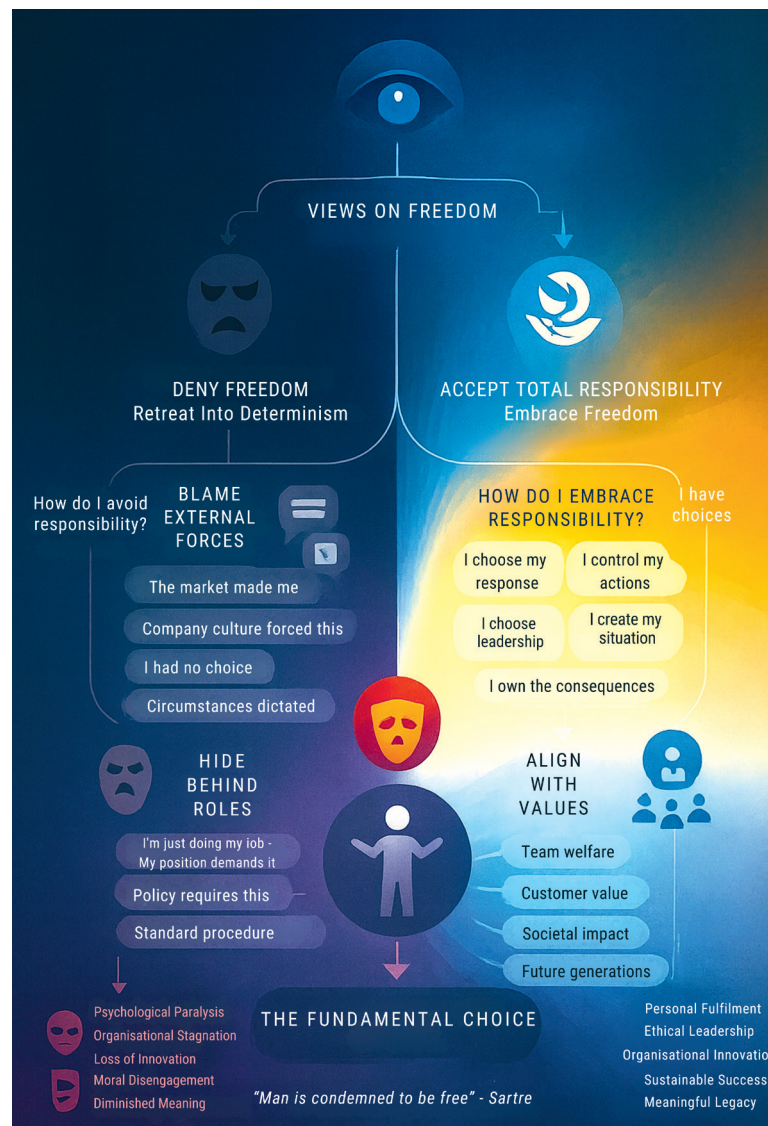


Figure 12: Existential Choice Framework

→ **Managerial Implication:** Before attributing decisions to external pressures or requirements, ask "What would I choose if I took full responsibility?" This mental shift often reveals previously invisible options.



CHAPTER 3

The Child's Spirit

CREATING A LASTING LEGACY

Nietzsche's third metamorphosis represents the spirit's arrival at genuine creativity and sophisticated innocence. Where the Camel bore burdens and the Lion broke chains, the Child creates new possibilities with a fresh perspective, unburdened by past limitations yet informed by accumulated wisdom.

The Child embodies what Nietzsche called "sacred yes-saying"—an affirmation of life and possibility that enables authentic creation. "The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel, a first movement". These qualities enable the building of legacies that serve beyond immediate needs. The Child builds from joy in creation itself, not from obligation or rebellion.

In my own journey, reaching the Child stage came after years of struggle and achievement. No longer needing to prove myself through accepting every burden or challenging every limitation, I could focus on creating what truly mattered. This freedom brings responsibility: building not for personal glory but for future generations.

For organisations reaching maturity, the Child stage represents possibilities for renewal that transcend past achievements while incorporating lessons learned. This requires wisdom to let go of successful approaches when they become limitations, and courage to experiment with possibilities not yet proven.

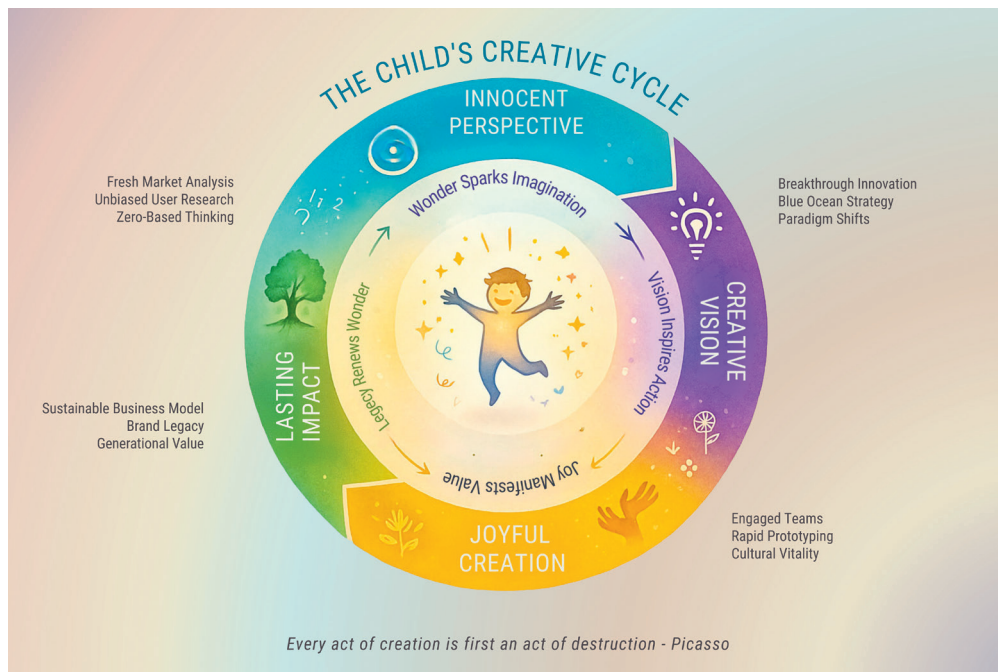


Figure 13: The Child's Creative Cycle

→ **Managerial Implication:** Approach one current challenge as if encountering it for the first time. What assumptions would you not make? What possibilities would seem obvious? A fresh perspective often reveals solutions hidden by experience.

THE ETERNAL RECURRENCE AS AN ETHICAL COMPASS

Nietzsche's concept of Eternal Recurrence provides a powerful framework for evaluating the significance of decisions. The thought experiment asks: if you had to live your life exactly as lived, infinitely repeated in every detail, would you choose to do so? This question transforms how we approach choices and commitments.

Applied to leadership, Eternal Recurrence asks: if the consequences of this decision continue infinitely, would I make the same decision? This shifts the focus from immediate results to enduring significance, from tactical advantage to strategic wisdom, from personal benefit to broader contribution.

The practical application proves simpler than the philosophical concept. Act each day in ways you would happily repeat forever. Make decisions that would serve well if they became permanent patterns. Build relationships that would enrich life if eternal. Create value that benefits humanity in perpetuity.

This ethical compass distinguishes between actions creating a genuine legacy and those generating temporary advantage. Legacy emerges from choices we would proudly repeat indefinitely, serving human flourishing rather than mere personal advancement.

When evaluating potential acquisitions, we apply this test: would we proudly repeat this integration approach infinitely? Does our treatment of employees, customers, and

communities represent patterns we want to be universal? This shifts the focus from successful deals to approaches creating lasting value.

The Eternal Recurrence test can also be applied to our daily behaviours. Consider how you respond to pressure, how you treat people who cannot advance your career, and how you handle confidential information. If these patterns were to repeat infinitely, would they lead to the world you desire?

This framework eliminates justifying poor behaviour through exceptional circumstances. There are no exceptions in Eternal Recurrence; every choice becomes eternal. This creates powerful motivation for consistency between values and actions.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Before making significant decisions, apply the Eternal Recurrence test. Would you want this choice and its approach repeated throughout the organisation indefinitely? If not, reconsider both the decision and the method.

BUILDING WITH CONSCIOUSNESS AND LEAVING TRACES, NOT NOISE

The Child's creation approach emphasises quality over quantity, substance over appearance, and lasting impact over immediate recognition. This requires conscious building: approaching each project with full attention to the potential contribution to human flourishing rather than mere immediate benefits.

Building with consciousness means taking time to do things properly rather than rushing toward results. This requires patient attention to foundation, careful material selection, and rigorous craftsmanship standards. The goal creates value that improves with time rather than deteriorating under pressure.

In business contexts, this translates to preferring sustainable competitive advantages over quick gains, investing in capability development rather than cost cutting, and building customer relationships rather than extracting maximum profits. The conscious builder asks: What institution am I creating through these choices?

The distinction between traces and noise is a key insight into how legacies are formed. Traces refer to lasting positive changes that persist beyond their creators, becoming part of institutional memory or cultural patterns. In contrast, noise consists of temporary activities that garner immediate attention but fail to create any enduring value.

Traces accumulate through the consistent application of sound principles over extended periods. They emerge from fulfilled promises, resolved problems, developed capabilities, and strengthened relationships. Traces represent the compound interest of ethical behaviour—small, consistent actions that accumulate into significant impacts.

Noise arises from activities primarily focused on achieving immediate recognition or advantage. Press releases that exaggerate achievements and initiatives that undermine long-term capability, along with behaviours prioritising personal advancement over the health of the organisation, create noise that attracts temporary attention but contributes nothing lasting.



Figure 14: Traces vs Noise

At Altrad, we assess our activities by asking whether they create traces or simply noise. Investing in employee development leaves lasting traces through enhanced individual capabilities, which contribute to organisational effectiveness over time. Our commitment to safety standards creates a culture that values and protects human life and dignity. Our acquisition approach focuses on unlocking potential rather than merely extracting value.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Review your team’s current initiatives. Categorise each as primarily creating traces (lasting positive change) or noise (temporary activity). Shift resources toward trace-creating activities even if they attract less immediate attention.

REFUSING HASTE AND EMBRACING RIGOUR

The Child’s creation approach emphasises a deliberate pace and careful attention to quality rather than speed. This acknowledges that meaningful achievements require appropriate developmental time and cannot be rushed without compromising essential qualities.

Rejecting haste means allowing significant work to unfold according to internal timelines rather than external pressures. Like biological growth, organisational development and capability building require adequate time for integration and maturation. Attempting to accelerate beyond natural limits often undermines results.

When acquiring companies, we learned that cultural integration cannot be forced through quick mandates. Genuine integration requires patient work, understanding existing capabilities, identifying improvements, and implementing changes at a pace that allows for adaptation. Rushing typically creates resistance rather than cooperation.

Embracing rigour means upholding high standards without yielding to pressure. The Child's innocence includes quality discernment, recognising excellence, and rejecting anything less than what is necessary for genuine achievement. This requires both technical competence and character development.

Rigour in leadership means consistently applying ethical standards when expedient exceptions appear attractive. It means maintaining transparent communication when difficult truths might create problems. It means investing in long-term capabilities when short-term cost cutting would improve immediate results.

This combination creates what I call "sustainable excellence": performance maintainable over extended periods without burnout or compromise. This represents the Child's alternative to excessive Camel burden-bearing and potentially destructive Lion rebellion.

This approach requires confidence that quality ultimately proves its worth, even when immediate recognition is limited. The Child builds from the joy of creation rather than dependency on external validation. This provides motivation that sustains effort during periods when results aren't immediately apparent.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Identify where haste compromises quality in your operations. Design systems protecting necessary development time whilst maintaining urgency for genuine priorities. Excellence requires an appropriate pace.

FOCUS ON LASTING IMPACT

The Child's creative spirit naturally focuses on contributions serving future generations rather than current stakeholders. This represents sophisticated altruism, understanding how individual flourishing connects to broader welfare and long-term institutional health.

Lasting impact arises from choices that strengthen the foundations for future achievements. This requires us to think beyond immediate beneficiaries and to consider how our current actions will affect people and circumstances in the future. The central question becomes: How will this decision support human potential across generations?

This perspective transforms how we allocate resources, plan strategically, and conduct daily operations. Instead of focusing solely on current performance, we consider how our choices will influence institutional capability, environmental sustainability, and social relationships, ultimately shaping future possibilities.

Our employee development approach exemplifies a focus on lasting impact. Rather than training only for immediate requirements, we invest in broad development serving individual growth and organisational adaptability. This creates compound benefits as trained employees contribute effectively, remain longer, and eventually train other employees.

Focusing on lasting impact also shapes innovation and technology adoption. Instead of pursuing every trend, we concentrate on developments aligning with fundamental purposes and which strengthen our customer service ability over the long term. This requires discriminating between genuine capability innovations and temporary advantage generators.

For environmental stewardship, lasting impact means considering full life cycle operation consequences rather than mere current compliance. The Child's perspective

recognises that environmental health provides a foundation for all human activity, deserving priority even when immediate costs appear high.

The personal dimension of lasting impact involves developing capabilities and relationships serving broader purposes throughout careers rather than mere immediate objectives. What skills create value regardless of position? What relationships contribute to mutual flourishing over the course of decades?

→ **Managerial Implication:** Extend planning horizons beyond conventional periods. For each major decision, trace potential impacts across five-, 10-, and 20-year time frames. This long-term thinking often reveals different optimal choices.

TRANSMITTING ACTIONS, NOT JUST WORDS

The Child understands that genuine legacy transmission occurs through demonstrated behaviour rather than verbal instruction. People learn more by observing consistent action patterns than by hearing articulated principles not consistently embodied. The most powerful teaching happens through example.

This insight profoundly impacts how leaders approach culture development and institutional continuity. Values cannot be instilled through mission statements alone but must be demonstrated through countless daily decisions revealing true priorities and commitments.

Every interaction, every resource allocation decision, every response to pressure provides an opportunity to either strengthen or weaken institutional culture. The Child recognises that these moments of demonstration carry more weight than written communication of values.

When facing difficult decisions, we apply the transmission test: What lesson does this choice teach about actual priorities? If people throughout the organisation observed this process, what would they learn about operations? This focuses attention on the educational impact of leadership behaviour.

Transmission particularly matters in how leaders handle pressure and uncertainty. During crises, people carefully observe how stated values translate into actual choices. Do leaders maintain ethical standards when easier alternatives exist? Do they support employees when pressures call for reducing commitments? Do they communicate transparently when withholding information might avoid difficulties?

These pressure moments reveal authentic character and transmit lessons remembered long after specific outcomes have faded from memory. The Child's wisdom understands that consistency during difficult times creates institutional memory, guiding future behaviour.

Managing success and recognition also conveys important lessons. Do leaders take credit for team achievements? Do they remain humble when recognition invites self-promotion? Do they use success to invest in others rather than to advance their personal status?

Response to failure teaches equally important lessons. People learn as much from observing how leaders handle disappointment as from managing success. Do setbacks prompt blame or learning? Do failures create defensive reactions or opportunities for improvement?



Figure 15: Action Transmission Model

→ **Managerial Implication:** Audit your typical week, identifying moments when your actions teach lessons about priorities and values. Ensure these implicit lessons align with the explicit cultural messages you want to convey.

GENERATIVITY, SYMBOLIC IMMORTALITY, AND DIGITAL LEGACY

The Child's creative spirit naturally connects with what Erik Erikson called “generativity”: the adult capacity for nurturing and creating things that outlast individual life. This represents sophisticated maturity, finding meaning through contributing to future generations rather than in mere personal achievement.

Generativity in leadership means using position and influence to develop capabilities, institutions, and relationships serving human flourishing beyond direct involvement.

This creates what anthropologists call symbolic immortality: continuation of influence through lasting positive change rather than biological reproduction alone.

For business leaders, generativity manifests through developing people, building institutional capability, and creating value serving community needs over the long term. The generative leader asks: How can my influence create conditions where others achieve more than they thought possible?

This perspective transforms succession planning from a mere replacement strategy to an opportunity to multiply positive influence. Instead of simply identifying successors, generative leaders create systems that develop multiple high-level contributors. The goal is institutional strengthening rather than individual replacement.

Our leadership development approach reflects this generative perspective. Rather than hoarding knowledge and authority, we systematically transfer capabilities, ensuring institutional memory and effectiveness continue regardless of personnel changes. This creates resilience whilst providing individual growth opportunities.

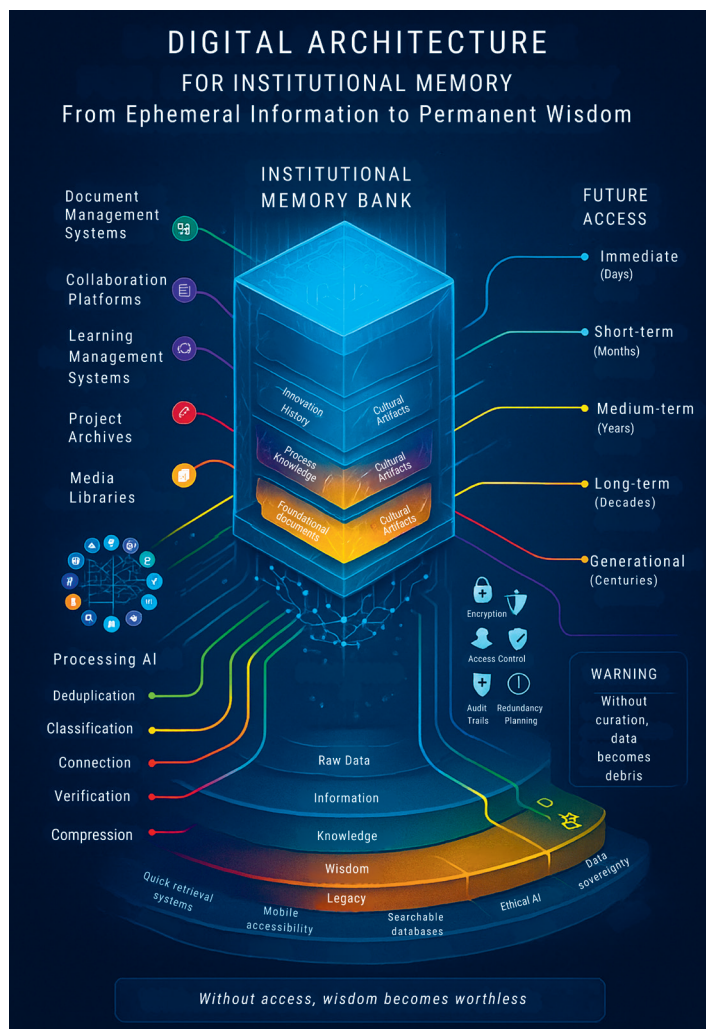


Figure 16: Digital Legacy Framework

The digital age introduces new dimensions to symbolic immortality through preservation of knowledge, maintenance of relationships, and institutional memory in forms accessible to future generations. Digital platforms enable the documentation of decision-making processes, the storage of lessons learned, and the continuation of community connections beyond geographic and temporal limitations.

Digital legacy also creates ethical responsibilities regarding information preservation and beneficial use. The Child's wisdom guides these choices, focusing on contributions to human flourishing rather than mere personal recognition or institutional power preservation.

Contemporary concerns about artificial intelligence and automation make generativity even more important. As technological capabilities expand, human contribution increasingly focuses on wisdom, creativity, and ethical judgement rather than routine processing. Generative leaders prepare others to develop these distinctly human capabilities.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Design knowledge capture systems preserving not just information but wisdom and context. Document why decisions were made, what alternatives were considered, and what lessons emerged. This creates an actionable legacy for the successor.

UNBOUNDED CONTRIBUTION AND MULTIGENERATIONAL STRATEGY

The Child's creative vision extends beyond conventional planning horizons, considering how current choices affect multiple future generations. This requires an unbounded contribution: approaching decisions with responsibility for consequences that extend far beyond immediate stakeholders and traditional measurement periods.

Unbounded contribution means acting not only for profit but for posterity, measuring success not only by share price but by legacy, designing strategy not only for the next quarter but for the next generation. This comprehensive perspective transforms opportunity evaluation and resource allocation.

Traditional strategy focuses primarily on competitive advantage within defined boundaries and periods. Multigenerational strategy expands by considering how current choices affect long-term viability, environmental sustainability, and social welfare across extended horizons.

This approach requires developing new metrics capturing long-term value alongside traditional financial measures. We track institutional health indicators, such as engagement, skill development, innovation capability, and stakeholder trust, which predict future performance more accurately than short-term results alone.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria provide frameworks for implementing a multigenerational strategy, ensuring decisions consider broader impacts and sustainability. Rather than treating ESG as a compliance requirement, we approach it as an opportunity for superior stewardship, creating a competitive advantage.

Our "Building a Sustainable World" commitment reflects this unbounded contribution perspective. Every project, acquisition, and operational decision is evaluated not only based on its immediate impact but also on its contribution to broader sustainability goals serving future generations.

Multigenerational thinking influences how we structure incentives and governance. Executive compensation includes long-term metrics encouraging decisions beneficial over extended periods rather than mere short-term optimisation. Board oversight includes consideration of institutional legacy alongside quarterly performance.

For individuals, unbounded contribution means developing capabilities and relationships serving purposes extending throughout careers rather than mere immediate objectives. Which capabilities retain value despite technological evolution? What relationships enable collaboration across generations?

→ **Managerial Implication:** Develop a multigenerational scorecard for your department, including metrics spanning one-, five-, 10-, and 20-year horizons. Use this broader view to guide resource allocation and strategic choices.

FROM FOUNDER TO FOUNDATION: INSTITUTIONALISING VALUES

The Child's creative wisdom recognises that a sustainable legacy requires transitioning from dependence on individual leaders to institutional foundations that maintain values and capabilities across changes in leadership. This represents one of the most challenging and important aspects of building a sustainable organisation.

Founder-driven organisations often achieve remarkable results through the charismatic vision, energy, and commitment of their founders. However, this strength becomes a weakness if effectiveness depends too heavily on personalities rather than institutional systems and culture.

The transition requires preserving the founder's spirit—the entrepreneurial energy, customer focus, and convention-challenging willingness driving innovation and excellence—whilst embedding qualities in institutional memory and systematic processes functioning independently.

This institutionalisation involves several elements. First, values must be articulated clearly enough for application to novel situations without direct guidance. Our five core values provide practical decision-making guidance at every level.

Second, we must create leadership development systems that emphasise value alignment alongside technical skills. Rather than promoting individuals based solely on performance metrics, we invest in ensuring that future leaders understand and embody cultural foundations, enabling sustainable success.

Third, we design decision processes that consistently reinforce core principles when external pressures suggest otherwise. This requires building cultural memory about how previous challenges were addressed and what approaches proved effective.

Fourth, establishing mechanisms of continuous renewal that prevent bureaucratic stagnation while preserving the institution's character is crucial. The Child's spirit of creative play must be preserved, enabling institutional renewal through joy in improvement rather than external pressure.

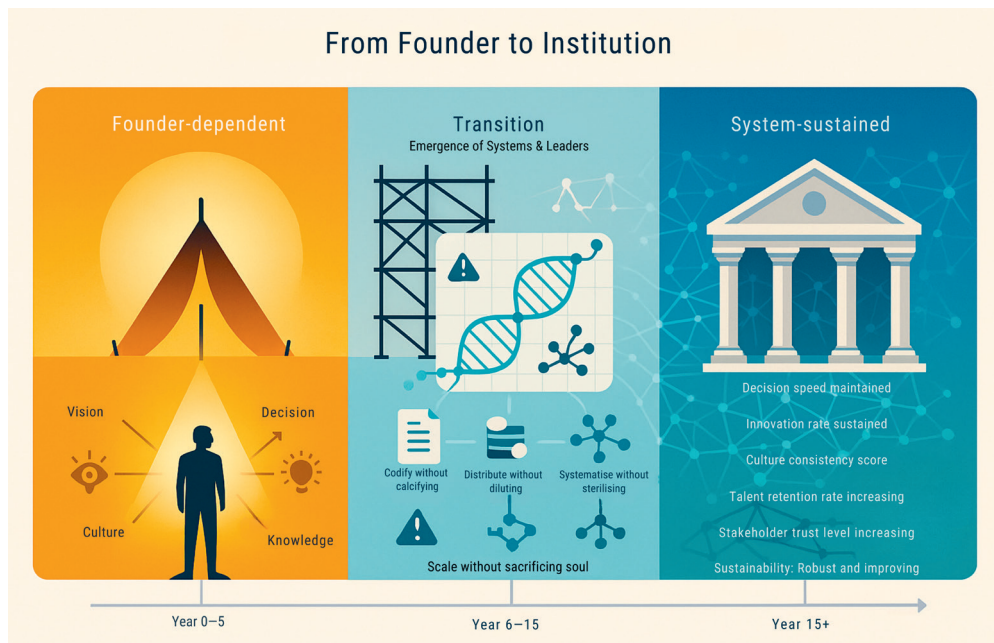


Figure 17: Founder to Foundation Transition

The process requires balancing apparent tensions: preserving entrepreneurial agility while building systematic capability, maintaining a spirit of innovation while ensuring operational excellence, and enabling local adaptation while preserving global coherence. Striking this balance requires sophisticated organisational wisdom to handle complexity.

Our acquisition approach illustrates this challenge. Each acquired company brings existing culture and capabilities that have enabled previous success. The goal is not uniformity but integrating diverse strengths whilst ensuring alignment on core values and objectives.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Document key decisions and their underlying reasoning, creating institutional memory beyond individual recollection. Build systems ensuring that important knowledge and values are transmitted across leadership generations.



CHAPTER 4

Strategic Imperatives

CULTIVATING OUR ETERNAL IMPRINT

Building an organisation that thrives across generations requires leaders who see themselves as stewards of institutional capability, not merely managers of current performance. This perspective transforms how we approach both daily responsibilities and long-term planning.

Leaders who serve eternal purposes must balance multiple horizons simultaneously. They deliver results for today's stakeholders whilst building capabilities for tomorrow's challenges. They respond to immediate conditions whilst maintaining strategic direction guided by unchanging values. This requires sophisticated judgement that cannot be reduced to simple formulas.

Through four decades of building Altrad, I have observed that most effective leaders see themselves as temporary custodians of something larger than careers. They make decisions not just for today's scoreboard but for tomorrow's foundation. This perspective requires both humility within one's role and ambition for the institution's future.

The challenge intensifies as technological change accelerates, stakeholder expectations rise, and global interconnections create new forms of complexity. Yet these same forces creating uncertainty also provide opportunities for organisations with a clear purpose and adaptive capability, creating lasting value.

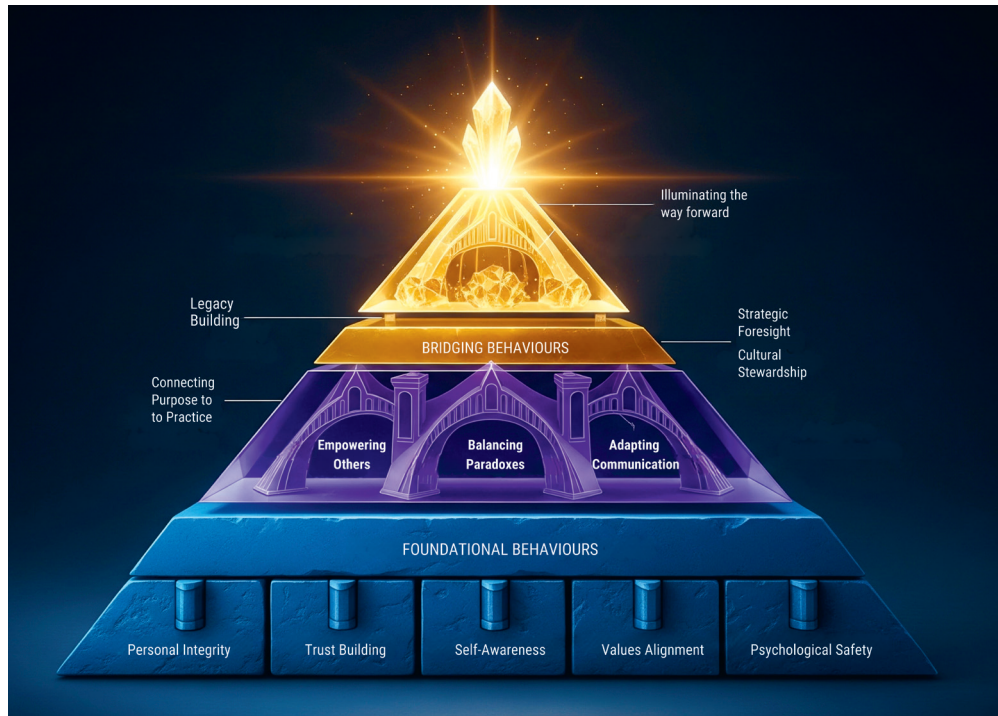


Figure 18: Strategic Leadership Framework

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create a personal leadership philosophy statement articulating how you balance short-term performance with long-term legacy building. Share this with your team, creating accountability for living these principles.

CHAMPIONING THE ENDURING VISION

Leaders committed to institutional longevity must consistently articulate and model how immediate actions serve eternal purposes. This requires translating abstract values into concrete, daily decision-making guidance while maintaining long-term possibility and inspiration.

Championing an enduring vision means helping people throughout the organisation understand how their individual contributions connect to purposes larger than immediate tasks. When a maintenance technician understands that equipment reliability serves customer safety and success, routine tasks become contributions to human welfare. When a project manager sees how efficient execution builds relationships that create future opportunities, planning becomes institutional investment.

This translation work requires leaders to develop fluency in multiple languages: the technical language of specific operations, the strategic language of competitive positioning, and the inspirational language of shared purpose. Effective leaders move seamlessly between these levels, connecting immediate tasks to strategic objectives to fundamental values.

Our approach to customer relationships illustrates this multilevel thinking. Operationally, we focus on delivering services efficiently and safely. Strategically, we build long-term partnerships that create competitive advantages. At the values level, we demonstrate that business success can serve human flourishing through employment, infrastructure development, and community welfare.

Championing vision becomes particularly important during difficult periods when immediate pressures might favour abandoning long-term commitments. During the 2020 pandemic, we maintained our investment in employee development and community support despite financial pressures because these commitments underscored our core values, and therefore were not considered discretionary expenditures.

The balance between inspiring hope and acknowledging reality requires delicate calibration. Leaders must inspire people to stretch their capabilities whilst providing realistic guidance about timelines and resources. This prevents both complacency and discouragement.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Develop an “elevation practice” where you regularly connect routine team activities to higher purposes. Begin meetings by briefly explaining how current work serves the larger organisational mission and values.

FOSTERING AGILITY AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Creating organisations that thrive through changing circumstances requires balancing operational flexibility with cultural stability. Leaders must empower people to adapt their approaches whilst maintaining alignment with fundamental purposes and values.

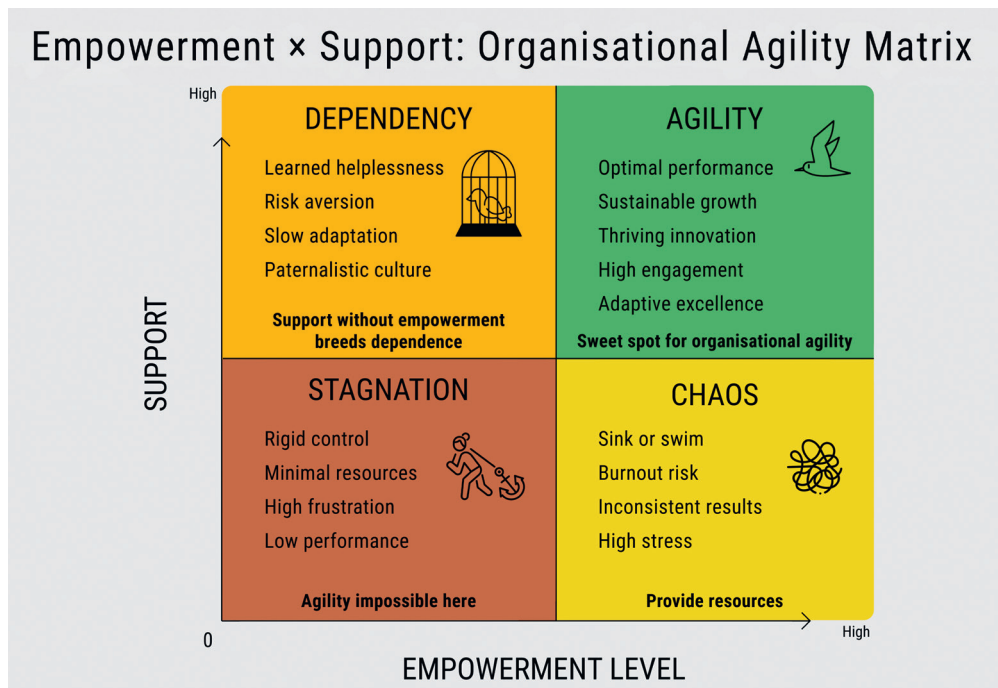
Cultivating agility means creating systems that enable rapid response to changing conditions without requiring constant oversight. This requires building institutional capabilities for pattern recognition, decision-making, and resource allocation in the face of uncertainty.

Our decentralised structure reflects this imperative. Rather than centralising all significant decisions, we establish clear principles and delegate authority to those closest to specific situations. This enables faster response whilst ensuring consistency with institutional values and objectives.

This empowerment approach requires significant investment in capability development, ensuring people throughout the organisation can make sound decisions independently. This includes not only technical training for specific roles but also broader education about institutional values, competitive positioning, and stakeholder relationships that should inform decisions.

Supporting people through change means recognising that adaptation creates uncertainty and stress that can undermine performance if not carefully managed. Leaders must provide psychological safety alongside operational flexibility, ensuring people feel supported even as they are challenged to grow.

This support manifests through clear communication about challenges and opportunities, honest acknowledgement of uncertainties, and consistent demonstration that institutional success depends on prioritising individual welfare rather than sacrificing it. People adapt more readily when they trust that change serves their long-term interests.



True organisational agility emerges only when high empowerment meets high support—freedom without resources creates chaos, resources without freedom creates dependency, and neither without both creates stagnation

Figure 19: Organisational Agility Matrix

The support dimension also includes attention to work-life integration, professional development opportunities, and recognition systems that reinforce desired behaviours. Without support, agility leads to burnout. Without agility, support creates stagnation. Effective leaders manage both simultaneously.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Conduct regular “empowerment audits” with your team to identify where additional authority would improve responsiveness and where additional support would enable confident action. Adjust both continuously.

REINFORCING VALUES THROUGH ACTION

The most powerful reinforcement of values occurs through consistent demonstration during high-pressure situations rather than through formal communication or training programmes. Leaders’ responses to difficult choices reveal institutional priorities more clearly than mission statements or policy documents ever could.

Reinforcing values requires understanding that every decision sends signals throughout the organisation about true priorities when trade-offs must be made. Do we maintain safety standards when pressure to meet deadlines mounts? Do we honour commitments to employees during financial stress? Do we treat all stakeholders with respect, regardless of their power to help or harm us?

These moments of choice create institutional memory that guides future behaviour. People observe carefully how stated values translate into actual decisions, adjusting their own behaviour and expectations accordingly. Inconsistency between proclaimed values and demonstrated priorities undermines trust and creates cynicism.

Our commitment to safety illustrates these reinforcement principles. We invest heavily in safety training, equipment, and procedures, not merely for compliance but because we believe every person deserves to return home safely. When the pressure to take shortcuts builds, we consistently choose safety over speed, reinforcing that human dignity matters more than deadlines.

The reinforcement process requires leaders to understand the educational impact of their choices. Every resource allocation teaches lessons about priorities. Every personnel decision demonstrates beliefs about human potential. Every customer interaction models approaches to relationship building.

The duty to model these values extends beyond formal leadership positions to everyone who influences organisational culture. Every employee contributes to values reinforcement through their daily choices about quality, cooperation, communication, and integrity.

Creating systems that recognise and reward values-consistent behaviour whilst addressing actions that are inconsistent with values strengthens this reinforcement. Examples include both formal performance management processes and informal peer recognition that celebrates cultural contributions.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create a “values victory” recognition programme where team members celebrate instances of values-based decision-making, especially when it required sacrifice. This makes principles visible and celebrated rather than abstract.

CULTIVATING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

To enable people to perform at their best, it is essential to cultivate psychological safety. This means individuals should feel confident in expressing their ideas, admitting mistakes, and voicing concerns without fear of negative repercussions. Such an environment fosters the learning, innovation, and collaboration needed for ongoing excellence.

Psychological safety emerges from consistent leadership behaviour that demonstrates genuine interest in truth over comfort, learning over blame, and collective success over individual advancement. Leaders create this environment by modelling vulnerability, curiosity, and respect for diverse perspectives.

Building safety requires understanding that people naturally self-protect when they perceive threats to their status, certainty, autonomy, relationships, or fairness. Leaders must actively reduce these perceived threats whilst maintaining high performance standards.

This balance between challenge and support requires sophisticated leadership skills. People need to feel safe taking risks whilst remaining accountable for results. They need confidence that mistakes will become learning opportunities whilst understanding that performance matters.

Our approach to project management illustrates this balance. We encourage teams to identify potential problems early and propose solutions rather than hiding issues until

they become crises. This requires creating confidence that bringing bad news will lead to problem-solving support rather than blame.

Psychological safety becomes particularly important during periods of change and uncertainty when people naturally feel increased anxiety about their future security. Leaders must provide extra communication, support, and reassurance whilst maintaining momentum for necessary adaptation.

The dimension of inclusion deserves special attention. When people feel their unique perspectives and backgrounds are valued rather than merely tolerated, they contribute more fully to problem-solving and innovation. Creating genuine inclusion requires conscious effort to seek out diverse viewpoints and ensure all voices are heard.

International expansion taught us that psychological safety must be culturally informed. What creates safety in one cultural context might create discomfort in another. Effective leaders develop sensitivity to these differences whilst maintaining a consistent commitment to fundamental principles.



Figure 20: Psychological Safety

→ **Managerial Implication:** Regularly ask team members: “What would make it easier for you to share concerns or new ideas?” Act on their responses to demonstrate a genuine commitment to creating safe environments for expression.

BALANCING HORIZONS AND PEOPLE

Leaders serving eternal purposes must balance multiple planning horizons whilst maintaining consistent attention to human welfare. This enables sustained performance over extended periods rather than short bursts followed by exhaustion.

Balancing horizons means understanding that different activities operate on different timelines. Operational excellence requires daily attention to quality and efficiency. Capability development requires quarterly and annual investment in training and systems. Strategic positioning requires multi-year commitments to market development and to building competitive advantage.

The challenge lies in maintaining attention to all horizons simultaneously without allowing short-term pressures to crowd out long-term investments, or allowing long-term vision to excuse poor short-term performance. This requires clear prioritisation frameworks and consistent communication about how different activities contribute to overall success.

Our acquisition strategy demonstrates this balance. Each acquisition must contribute to immediate financial performance whilst also building capabilities that serve long-term strategic objectives. We evaluate potential acquisitions not just on current performance but on how they strengthen our ability to serve customers and nurture talent over time.

The people dimension requires understanding that sustainable performance depends on sustaining human energy and engagement across all planning horizons. Short-term pressure that undermines people's long-term potential creates institutional weakness. Long-term investment that ignores immediate human needs creates near-term performance problems.

This people-centred approach means designing work systems that challenge people to grow whilst providing support for success. It means creating career development opportunities that serve both individual aspirations and institutional needs. It means maintaining compensation and recognition systems that reward both current contributions and long-term potential.

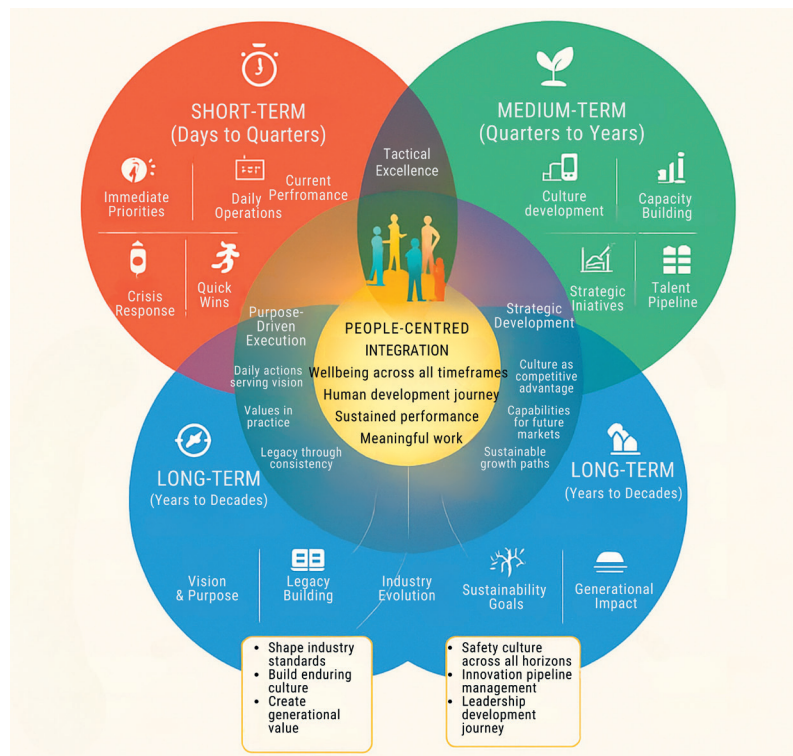


Figure 21: Horizon Integration Model

Work-life integration, professional development, and meaning-making all contribute to sustained engagement over time. People perform best when they see how their work contributes to purposes they value, whilst also having opportunities for personal growth and meaningful impact.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create a “horizon dashboard” that visually tracks short, medium, and long-term initiatives alongside their impact on people. Review this regularly to ensure balanced attention and resource allocation across all time frames.

TEAM MOBILISATION: COLLECTIVE STRENGTH AND INDIVIDUAL PURPOSE

Creating organisations that achieve sustained excellence requires mobilising collective capabilities whilst nurturing individual purpose and engagement. This mobilisation cannot be mandated; it must emerge from a shared commitment to purposes that serve both personal and institutional success.

Team mobilisation for eternal purposes requires understanding that people are most powerfully motivated when they can connect their individual aspirations to collective achievements that serve broader human welfare. This connection cannot be imposed but must be cultivated through consistent leadership that demonstrates how personal and institutional success reinforce each other.

My experience with rugby taught me important lessons about team dynamics that are directly applicable to the business world. In rugby, while individual talent is valuable, it is the coordinated effort of the team that leads to victory. The same principle applies to organisational success: we need to create an environment where individual skills complement, rather than compete with, one another.

Connecting Work to Meaning

People perform at their highest level when they understand how their contributions serve purposes they care about beyond immediate task requirements. Creating these connections requires leaders who can translate institutional purposes into personal significance whilst respecting individual values and aspirations.

The process of meaning-making begins with helping people understand how their specific roles contribute to overall institutional success. This requires clear communication about strategy, competitive positioning, and stakeholder relationships that provide context for daily activities. When people understand the larger picture, routine tasks become contributions to significant achievements.

Connection also requires understanding individual motivations and aspirations so that work assignments can be structured to serve both organisational needs and personal development goals. This alignment creates engagement that sustains effort through difficult periods whilst building capabilities for future opportunities.

Our approach to project staffing illustrates this meaning-making process. Rather than simply assigning tasks based on availability, we help team members understand how project success serves customer needs, builds competitive advantages, and creates

opportunities for professional growth. This multidimensional understanding transforms compliance-based work into contribution-based engagement.

The meaning-making imperative becomes particularly important for routine or repetitive work that might otherwise feel insignificant. Every role, properly understood, contributes to institutional success and human welfare. Leaders must help people discover these connections rather than assuming they are self-evident.

This discovery process involves helping people understand how the effective execution of basic tasks lays the foundation for more complex achievements, how reliability in small matters builds trust that enables them to take on larger responsibilities, and how mastery of their current role prepares them for future opportunities. The goal is to create consciousness of contribution rather than mere task completion.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Schedule monthly one-on-one conversations with team members, specifically exploring how their work connects to personal values and organisational purpose. Document these connections and reference them when assigning new responsibilities.

Developing Collective Resilience

Teams function most effectively when they combine strong group cohesion with attention to individual member welfare. Building collective resilience requires fostering collaboration, mutual support, and open communication within and across teams to sustain both immediate performance and long-term vitality.

Collective resilience emerges from the combination of individual capabilities and interpersonal relationships that create networks of mutual support during difficult periods. This requires investment in both personal development and team building to strengthen the bonds between people who must rely on each other under pressure.

The foundation for resilience is psychological safety that enables people to acknowledge challenges and request support without fear of negative consequences. When team members trust that colleagues and leaders will respond constructively to difficulties, they address problems earlier and more effectively.

This safety foundation enables the transparent communication necessary for effective problem-solving under pressure. Teams that can discuss challenges honestly whilst maintaining mutual respect solve problems more quickly and learn from difficulties more effectively than teams that avoid difficult conversations.

Our approach to safety management illustrates collective resilience principles. We create systems where everyone takes responsibility for identifying hazards and proposing improvements rather than leaving safety to specialists alone. This distributed responsibility creates multiple layers of vigilance that prevent problems whilst building confidence in collective capability.

Building resilience also requires developing redundancy in capabilities so teams can continue functioning effectively even when key members are unavailable. This includes cross-training for multiple roles, documenting critical processes, and creating knowledge-sharing practices that prevent single points of failure.



Figure 22: Team Resilience Model

Collective resilience grows as teams successfully overcome challenges together. Teams that navigate difficulties whilst maintaining mutual support develop confidence in their ability to handle future obstacles. Leaders can accelerate this process by creating controlled challenges that require collaborative problem-solving.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Design quarterly team challenges that require collaborative problem-solving under time constraints. Debrief these experiences, focusing on how mutual support enabled success, building a library of “resilience stories” that demonstrate collective capability.

Fostering Collaboration for Innovation and Adaptability

Creating organisations capable of continuous renewal requires collaboration that generates new insights and approaches rather than merely coordinating existing activities. This generative collaboration emerges when diverse perspectives engage constructively with shared challenges.

Innovation-focused collaboration requires bringing together people with different backgrounds, expertise, and thinking styles to address challenges that cannot be solved through conventional approaches. This diversity creates productive tension that generates novel solutions whilst requiring sophisticated communication and conflict resolution capabilities.

The collaboration process must balance creative exploration with practical implementation. Innovation requires freedom to experiment with ideas that might not succeed,

whilst adaptation requires discipline to implement proven solutions effectively. Leaders must create space for both whilst maintaining focus on results.

Our approach to customer problem-solving illustrates this collaborative innovation. When customers present challenges that exceed our current capabilities, we assemble cross-functional teams including technical specialists, project managers, and customer relationship managers to develop novel approaches. This collaborative process generates solutions that no individual could create alone.

The innovation imperative requires creating systems that capture and share insights emerging from collaborative problem-solving. When teams develop effective approaches to novel challenges, this learning must be preserved and transmitted to others facing similar situations. This institutional learning accelerates organisational adaptation.

Collaboration for adaptability requires understanding that external conditions change continuously, requiring that we modify approaches that previously worked. Teams must balance confidence in proven methods with openness to revising approaches when circumstances shift.

This adaptive collaboration includes regular reflection on what is working well and what could be improved, honest assessment of changing external conditions that might require new approaches, and willingness to experiment with modifications when current methods show limitations. The goal is continuous evolution rather than periodic revolution.

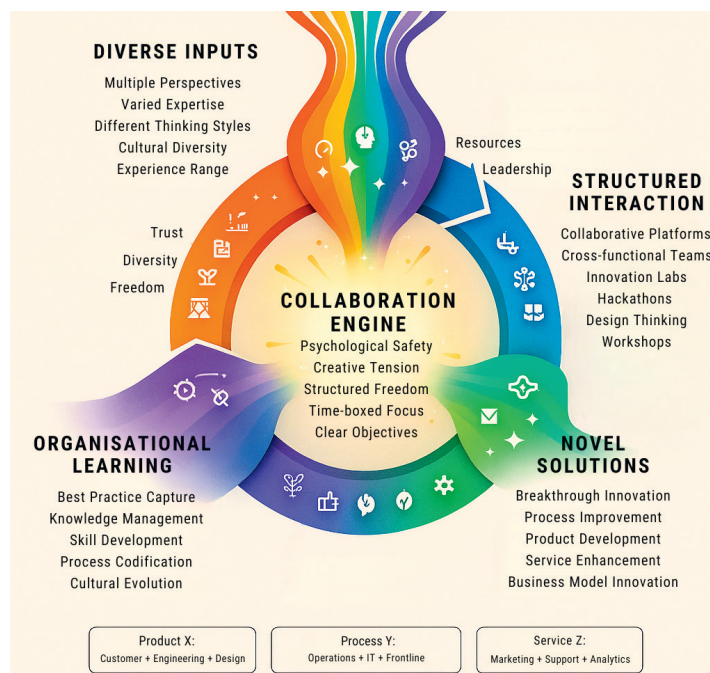


Figure 23: Innovation Collaboration Cycle

→ **Managerial Implication:** Establish monthly “innovation circles” where cross-functional teams address challenges outside their normal responsibilities. Rotate membership quarterly to ensure fresh perspectives whilst documenting and sharing solutions organisation-wide.

Empowering Contribution

Maximising human potential within organisations requires empowering people to contribute at their highest level rather than merely executing predetermined tasks. This empowerment creates engagement and innovation that serve both individual fulfilment and institutional excellence.

True empowerment begins with ensuring people understand institutional objectives and constraints clearly enough to make informed decisions about how to contribute most effectively. This requires transparent communication about strategy, priorities, and resource availability that enables sound decision-making at every level.

The empowerment process requires delegating genuine authority commensurate with responsibility, enabling people to act on their judgement without excessive oversight. This delegation must be balanced with accountability systems that ensure institutional standards are maintained whilst providing freedom for creativity and initiative.

Our decentralised structure reflects this empowerment philosophy. Rather than centralising all significant decisions, we provide clear principles and guidelines that enable people closest to specific situations to make appropriate choices. This creates faster response times whilst ensuring consistency with institutional values and objectives.

Empowerment requires investment in capability development to ensure people have the skills and knowledge necessary for expanded responsibilities. This includes not only technical training for specific tasks but also broader education about institutional context, competitive positioning, and stakeholder relationships that should inform decisions.

The contribution focus means creating opportunities for people to influence institutional direction rather than merely implementing decisions made elsewhere. This includes soliciting input on strategic planning, involving people in problem-solving beyond their immediate responsibilities, and recognising contributions that strengthen institutional capability.

Our approach to continuous improvement provides an example. Rather than imposing solutions from above, we empower teams to identify inefficiencies and develop improvements within their areas of expertise. This bottom-up approach to innovation creates better solutions whilst building ownership and engagement.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create “contribution maps” for each team member showing current authority levels and planned progression toward greater responsibility. Review these quarterly, expanding scope as capabilities develop, and celebrate instances where empowered decisions create value.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS FOR RESILIENCE, LEGACY, AND WELL-BEING

Building organisations capable of sustained excellence across generations requires strategic frameworks that integrate multiple objectives and time frames whilst maintaining coherent direction and resource allocation. These frameworks must provide structure for complex decision-making whilst preserving flexibility for adaptation.

Strategic frameworks serving eternal purposes must address three fundamental challenges: maintaining operational excellence whilst building future capabilities, balancing diverse stakeholder interests whilst preserving institutional integrity, and adapting to changing circumstances whilst maintaining essential character.

Through decades of navigating these challenges, I have learned that effective frameworks must be sophisticated enough to handle complexity, yet simple enough for practical application. They must provide stability whilst enabling change, much like desert grasses that bend with the wind whilst maintaining deep roots.

Integrated Strategic Planning for Long-Term Impact

In the Syrian desert of my youth, we planned water usage not just for the day ahead but for the season, the year, the generation. This experience taught me that effective strategic planning must integrate various time horizons into a single, coherent approach. Too often, businesses create artificial divisions by separating short-term operations from long-term strategy, which weakens both aspects.

Integrated planning begins with the understanding that every immediate action carries the potential for future consequences. When we acquired the struggling scaffolding company in 1985, our integration plan addressed three horizons simultaneously. First, we focused on immediate stabilisation by paying suppliers, reassuring employees, and securing customer orders. Second, we concentrated on capability building by upgrading equipment, training workers, and establishing quality systems. Third, we looked at strategic positioning, which involved understanding how scaffolding services would evolve with construction methods, anticipating unwritten safety regulations, and preparing for future international expansion.

This integration requires the development of temporal bilingualism, which is the ability to speak both the language of urgent quarterly results and the language of patient generational building. Practically, this means that every strategic review should include paired questions: How does this serve us today? How does this serve us tomorrow? What actions must we take now? What should we preserve for the future?

Our planning process follows rhythms that honour both urgency and patience. Monthly operational reviews focus on immediate performance whilst always including one question about long-term implications. Annual strategic sessions begin not with current competition but with societal trends shaping markets over decades. We ask: What human needs will endure? What capabilities remain valuable regardless of technological change? What relationships compound in value over time?

The framework we've developed includes several practical tools. First, we map decisions across a time and stakeholder impact matrix. Decisions affecting next quarter's revenue and current employees occupy one quadrant; choices about environmental practices affecting communities for decades occupy another. This visual representation helps leaders see beyond immediate pressures.

Second, we've institutionalised "future councils" comprising younger employees who will live with decisions longest. Their perspective often reveals implications that senior leaders, focused on their remaining tenure, might miss. This isn't about diminishing experience but enriching it with longer sight lines.

Third, we link incentives across time horizons. Manager compensation includes metrics for immediate performance, three-year capability development, and ten-year strategic goal contributions. This prevents the common fallacy of sacrificing tomorrow for today's numbers.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Implement “three horizon thinking” in all significant decisions. For each choice, document immediate impact (0-1 year), capability implications (1-5 years), and legacy effects (5+ years). Weigh all three equally.

Holistic Performance Measurement for Legacy

Numbers tell stories, but only if we ask the right questions. Traditional business metrics, such as revenue, profit, and return on investment, reveal important truths but overlook essential dimensions of institutional health. Building for eternity requires measurement systems that see the whole, not just easily counted parts.

I learned this lesson early. In our first years, we celebrated when monthly revenue exceeded costs. But this narrow focus nearly blinded us to deeper currents. We won contracts by cutting prices, pleased customers by overworking people, generated cash by deferring maintenance. Numbers looked healthy whilst the organisation grew sick.

Crisis came when three experienced supervisors left within a month. No financial metric warned us. No operational indicator flashed red. Yet we had been hollowing out our human foundation whilst celebrating numerical success. This taught me that what we measure shapes what we see, and what we see shapes what we become.

Holistic measurement begins by recognising that organisational health has multiple vital signs. Financial results are like body temperature: important but insufficient for diagnosis. We must also measure circulation (information and resource flow), immune system (threat response), muscle tone (capabilities), and neural function (decision-making processes).

Our measurement framework includes five integrated dimensions. First, financial sustainability is not just about current profits, but also about patterns indicating long-term viability. We track customer concentration, revenue predictability, and investment ratios revealing whether we're building or eroding the future.

Second, operational excellence is defined broadly. Yes, we measure efficiency and quality, but also adaptability: How quickly can we reconfigure for new requirements? How effectively do we learn from problems? How well do we share knowledge across boundaries?

Third, human flourishing goes beyond traditional HR metrics. We measure not just retention but engagement. Not just skills but growth trajectories. Not just safety incidents, but the underlying culture of safety that prevents them. Slight employee engagement decline predicts operational problems two quarters later more reliably than most financial indicators.

Fourth, stakeholder trust is more challenging to quantify but essential to track. We survey customers not just about satisfaction but also about confidence in our future. We measure community relationships not through charitable donations but through local hiring, supplier development, and environmental impact. We track investor confidence not just through share price but through quality questions about long-term strategy.

Fifth, innovation vitality. Not just new products or services, but the health of our creative ecosystem. What percentage of revenue comes from capabilities we didn't have five years ago? How many employee suggestions get implemented? How quickly do we adopt better practices discovered elsewhere?

→ **Managerial Implication:** Develop a team-specific “eternity scorecard” including at least one metric from each dimension. Review monthly, discussing relationships between dimensions. Celebrate improvements of nonfinancial metrics the same as we do for financial gains.

Robust Feedback and Learning Loops

The desert taught me that survival depends not on avoiding mistakes but on learning from them faster than conditions change. Organisations unable to learn cannot last. Yet most businesses design for efficiency, not learning. They optimise for repetition when they should prepare for adaptation.

True feedback loops require more than collecting information. They demand courage to see clearly, wisdom to interpret correctly, and discipline to act on insights even when challenging comfortable assumptions. This is easier described than achieved.

In the early years, we often confused activity with learning. After each project, we conducted reviews, documented lessons learned, and filed reports. Yet we kept making the same mistakes. We repeatedly missed opportunities. We were going through the motions of learning without getting anything out of it.

The breakthrough came when we realised that learning is not just an event but a continuous process—much like metabolism. Just as the body constantly converts food into energy and eliminates waste, organisations must continuously transform experience into capability and mistakes into resilience.

This process requires three levels of feedback loops operating simultaneously.

First, rapid feedback loops function like reflexes. When a safety hazard emerges, the response must be instant, without the need for committees or formal analysis. We have trained our teams to act first, document second, and analyse third. For example, when a near-miss incident occurred in Morocco, we triggered immediate global communication within hours, not weeks.

Second, tactical feedback loops operate like conscious thought, functioning on weekly and monthly rhythms to identify patterns and adjust approaches. For instance, a project manager may notice that certain suppliers consistently deliver late. Instead of accepting this as unchangeable, the team investigates the root causes, uncovers systemic issues, and develops new procurement strategies.

Third, strategic feedback loops operate like wisdom, functioning over a longer time frame—annually or even longer—to recognise deep-seated patterns and fundamental shifts. Over the years, we observed that the most profitable projects were not necessarily the largest, but rather those that fostered the deepest customer relationships. This insight, which emerged gradually from accumulated experience, reshaped our entire market approach.

Creating robust feedback loops requires not just the right infrastructure but also a supportive culture. We have established systems that make learning easier than *not* learning.

Every project plan includes reflection time. Each team meeting begins with a discussion of a learning experience from the previous week. Additionally, every leadership gathering features stories of intelligent failures alongside celebrations of success.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Establish a “learning velocity” metric to track time from problem identification to solution implementation. Set aggressive targets to reduce this cycle time. Create “failure parties” celebrating lessons from intelligent risks that didn’t succeed.

GOVERNANCE FOR ENDURANCE AND ETHICS

Governance, properly understood, isn’t about control but navigation. Like stars guiding desert travellers, governance principles provide fixed reference points whilst allowing infinite paths between them. Too many organisations confuse governance with bureaucracy, creating rigid rules that prevent adaptation. True governance enables both integrity and agility.

My understanding of governance crystallised during a crisis. A major customer demanded that we falsify safety records to meet an impossible deadline. The financial temptation was enormous—15% of our revenue. Traditional business logic suggested negotiation, compromise, and perhaps creative interpretation.

But governance isn’t about finding loopholes. It’s about knowing which lines we must never cross, regardless of consequence. We refused. We lost the contract. We struggled financially for two quarters. But we gained something worth more than any contract: unshakeable trust from our people and our remaining customers.

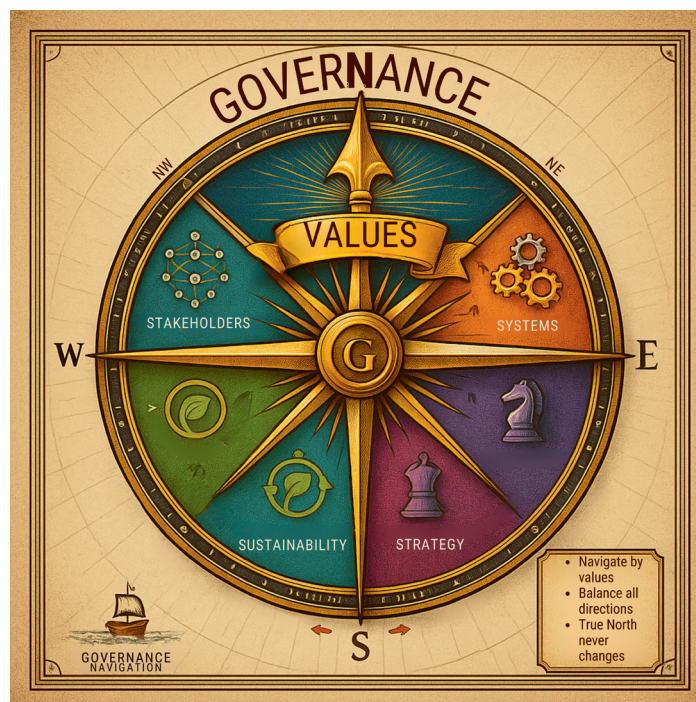


Figure 24: Governance Compass

Governance for endurance requires understanding that organisations, like people, are defined not by aspirations but by choices made under pressure. Any company can proclaim values when times are good. Character reveals when values cost more than convenience.

Our governance framework rests on five pillars, like interdependent tent poles. Remove one, and the structure collapses. Maintain all five, and the tent withstands any storm.

First, clarity of purpose transcending profit. Profit, like breathing, is essential for life, but it is not life's purpose. Our purpose, "Building a Sustainable World", provides a final test for decision-making. Does this choice contribute to broadly defined sustainability: environmental, social, and economic? If not, no financial return justifies it.

Second, stakeholder integration rather than shareholder primacy. Not fashionable stakeholder capitalism, but practical recognition that sustainable success requires balanced relationships. Exploiting any stakeholder—whether employee, customer, supplier, or community—creates future vulnerability. Governance explicitly considers impacts across all groups.

Third, temporal balance between present needs and future capability. Every board meeting discusses three horizons: current performance, emerging challenges, and generational impact. Directors are evaluated not just on management oversight but on legacy stewardship.

Fourth, cultural coherence across geographic and business diversity. As we've expanded globally, maintaining a unified culture whilst respecting local contexts has become critical. Governance cannot impose uniformity but must ensure compatibility. Values may translate differently in different contexts, but they must always remain authentic.

Fifth, systematic renewal preventing stagnation. Governance itself must evolve. We limit board terms, ensuring fresh perspectives. We require directors to spend time in operations, not just boardrooms. We evaluate governance effectiveness not by compliance metrics but by decision quality under uncertainty.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create "ethical muscle memory" through monthly scenario exercises. Present teams with realistic dilemmas requiring values-based choices. Practice responses until integrity becomes instinct, faster than any calculation.

Technology Integration and Ethical Data Governance

Digital transformation presents both unprecedented opportunities and profound ethical challenges for organisations building lasting legacies. Technology can amplify our capabilities to serve human needs or create new forms of harm if deployed thoughtlessly. The Child's wisdom guides us toward uses enhancing rather than replacing human connection and judgement.

Our approach to technology integration begins with a clear principle: digital tools should empower people, not diminish them. When implementing new systems, we evaluate not just efficiency gains but human impact. Will this technology develop or atrophy human capabilities? Does it bring people together or drive them apart? These questions matter more than pure productivity metrics.

Data governance represents a particular challenge requiring new ethical frameworks. We collect vast amounts of information about employees, customers, and operations.

This data can improve safety, enhance service, and enable better decisions. It can also violate privacy, perpetuate biases, and create vulnerabilities lasting decades.

We have developed a concept we refer to as “data stewardship”, where we treat information management with the same level of care we apply to physical safety. This approach includes minimising data collection to only what is genuinely necessary, securing storage against breaches, restricting access to legitimate purposes, and empowering individuals to take control of their personal information.

Artificial intelligence integration requires special attention. AI can help identify safety risks, optimise resource allocation, and personalise development opportunities. But we must guard against algorithmic bias, maintain human oversight of critical decisions, and ensure AI augments rather than replaces human judgement.

Consider how Google DeepMind’s publication of AI ethics principles signalled a commitment to responsible innovation, building public trust. Conversely, the Equifax data breach caused immense reputational and financial harm, demonstrating how technical failures become ethical failures, undermining decades of trust building.

Our “human-first digitalisation” ensures technology serves our eternal purposes. Every digital initiative must demonstrate how it enhances human potential, strengthens stakeholder relationships, or enables better service. If technology only reduces costs without creating value, we reconsider implementation.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Establish a “digital ethics review board” including diverse perspectives, evaluating all significant technology implementations. Create a simple checklist that ensures human impact, privacy protection, and value alignment are considered before deployment.

Global Principles, Local Adaptation

Operating across diverse cultures and markets requires a delicate balance between maintaining unified values and respecting local contexts. The Child’s innocent wisdom helps us see past surface differences to underlying human universals, whilst appreciating genuine cultural distinctions requiring different approaches.

Our “glocal” philosophy recognises certain principles remain constant across all operations: safety paramount, integrity non-negotiable, human dignity sacred. Yet how these principles manifest must adapt to local understanding and practice. Respect looks different in Japan than in Brazil, but disrespect is universally recognised.

This balance requires what I call “cultural curiosity”, approaching each new market with a genuine interest in local wisdom rather than assuming our ways are superior. When entering new territories, we spend months listening before acting, learning before teaching, and understanding before implementing.

Nigeria’s expansion exemplified this approach. Local business customs included practices that conflicted with our values. Rather than either compromising principles or avoiding the market, we engaged in a deep understanding of the underlying relationship needs that these practices served. We then developed alternative approaches meeting the same needs whilst maintaining our ethical standards.

The integration process consists of three phases: first, deep listening to understand the local context, relationships, and expectations; second, creative adaptation by finding ways

to express our values that resonate locally; and third, patient demonstration to show that our approaches can succeed while respecting local culture.

Technology helps maintain global coherence whilst enabling local adaptation. Digital platforms allow teams to share best practices across regions, whilst translation tools and cultural guides help teams understand different contexts. But technology supplements, never replaces, human relationship building.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create “cultural translation guides” for each market documenting how core values are expressed locally. Include examples, case studies, and common misunderstandings. Update quarterly based on field experience.

STRATEGIC SOCIETAL CONTRIBUTION

The Altrad Solidarity Endowment Fund

Building a truly eternal legacy requires contributing beyond business boundaries to broader human flourishing. The Altrad Solidarity Endowment Fund represents our commitment to creating a positive impact, outlasting any commercial enterprise. This is not corporate charity but an integral expression of our belief that business success must serve societal progress.

The Fund focuses on three areas reflecting our values and capabilities. First, we can provide access to education for disadvantaged youth, particularly in technical and engineering fields, including funding, mentorship, and career pathways. Second, we support community infrastructure that supports economic development in regions where we operate. Third, emergency response leveraging our logistics capabilities during natural disasters or humanitarian crises.

What distinguishes our approach is integration with business operations rather than separation. When we develop training programmes for Fund beneficiaries, our operations benefit from expanded talent pools. When we support community infrastructure, we strengthen environments where our employees live. This alignment ensures sustainability beyond any individual's charitable impulse.

The Fund operates with the same governance rigour as our commercial operations. We measure impact not just by the money distributed, but by the lives transformed. We track beneficiaries over decades, gaining insight into long-term effects. We share lessons learned contributing to broader social innovation.

Recent examples demonstrate multiplicative impact. In Senegal, of the 200 young people who graduated from technical training programmes, 80% found employment with Altrad or partners. In India, water infrastructure projects have benefited 10,000 residents through the training of local maintenance crews, creating ongoing employment. In Haiti, disaster response evolved into a permanent skills development centre.

Digital platforms enable Fund beneficiaries to maintain connections, creating a global alumni network. Former students become mentors. Local programmes share innovations. Success stories inspire expanded commitment. This network effect amplifies impact beyond direct investment.

The Fund also serves an internal purpose, connecting employees to the broader mission. Volunteering opportunities, mentorship programmes, and field visits help our people see

the direct impact of their work. This connection to purpose enhances engagement and retention whilst developing leadership capabilities.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Identify how your team can contribute to Fund initiatives through skills, time, or connections. Create an annual “impact day” where team members engage directly with beneficiaries. Share stories that connect daily work to societal benefits.

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Phase 1: Foundation Setting (Months 1–6)

Translating eternal aspirations into practical reality requires systematic implementation, balancing urgency with patience. The first phase focuses on creating shared understanding and initial momentum whilst avoiding change fatigue, which overwhelms people’s absorption capacity.

Begin with leadership alignment, ensuring all senior managers deeply understand eternity concepts and their practical implications. This requires more than intellectual agreement; leaders must emotionally connect with long-term legacy building, offsetting short-term performance pressure. Conduct immersive workshops exploring personal legacy aspirations, connecting to organisational eternity.

Simultaneously launch “eternity conversations” throughout the organisation. Rather than relying on top-down communication, create dialogues that explore what an enduring legacy means to different teams and individuals. Document diverse perspectives, recognising that eternity manifests differently across functions and cultures whilst maintaining core principles.

Establish baseline measurements across all five holistic performance dimensions. This provides a starting point for tracking progress whilst identifying areas requiring immediate attention. Expect to discover gaps between assumed and actual performance, particularly in the dimensions of human flourishing and innovation vitality.

Create pilot teams experimenting with new approaches. Select groups combining high readiness with strategic importance. Provide extra support and visibility whilst protecting from excessive scrutiny. Early successes build confidence and provide examples for broader rollout.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Form an “eternity champion” network, including respected individuals from each area. Meet monthly to share experiences and solve implementation challenges. Create a safe space for expressing doubts whilst maintaining momentum.

Phase 2: Systematic Implementation (Months 7–18)

The second phase expands successful pilots whilst addressing revealed challenges. Expect resistance to emerge as changes move from experiment to expectation. Some will embrace the eternal perspective enthusiastically, whilst others struggle to reconcile with immediate pressures.

Roll out integrated planning processes, ensuring all significant decisions consider multiple time horizons. Initially, this feels cumbersome as teams learn temporal bilingualism. Provide templates and facilitation support whilst allowing local adaptation. Gradually, multi-horizon thinking becomes a natural part of decision-making.

Implement holistic performance measurement, adjusting existing systems rather than replacing them entirely. Add new metrics gradually whilst demonstrating connections to traditional measures. Show how employee engagement predicts financial performance. Demonstrate innovation vitality to enable a competitive advantage.

Strengthen feedback loops. Quick wins come from improving immediate reflexive responses to safety or quality issues. Deeper value emerges from tactical feedback loops, which identify patterns, and strategic feedback loops, which recognise fundamental shifts. Invest in systems and a culture that supports continuous learning.

Address governance evolution to ensure that structures support both integrity and agility. This may require changes to board composition, bringing longer-term perspectives. Update policies, translating principles into practical guidance. Strengthen ethical decision-making capabilities through scenario-based training.

Launch technology integration initiatives prioritising human empowerment. Select projects that demonstrate clear value while building confidence in human-first digitalisation. Address data governance by establishing robust frameworks before major implementations. Learn from early experiences by adjusting approaches.

Begin cultural adaptation processes in different markets. Document how eternal principles are expressed locally whilst maintaining global coherence. Create mechanisms to share lessons across regions. Celebrate successful adaptations demonstrating that unity doesn't require uniformity.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Keep an “implementation journal” documenting challenges faced, solutions attempted, and lessons learned. Share entries in leadership forums, normalising difficulty whilst demonstrating progress. Build collective wisdom about the change process.

Phase 3: Cultural Integration (Months 1–36)

The final phase embeds eternity thinking into organisational DNA, ensuring sustainability beyond the implementation effort. The changes must become “how we do things here” rather than special initiatives requiring constant attention and energy.

Integrate eternity principles into all talent processes. Recruitment evaluates alignment with long-term thinking. Onboarding emphasises legacy building alongside immediate responsibilities. Development programmes build capabilities for multi-horizon leadership. Succession planning ensures the transmission of values across generations.

Develop organisational structures to support distributed decision-making based on clear principles. Reduce the layers of hierarchy to enable faster responses. Strengthen horizontal connections to facilitate collaboration and create forums for bottom-up innovation. Trust individuals to make good decisions when they are empowered with clear values and adequate information.

Institutionalise learning mechanisms to make continuous improvement a natural rhythm. Post-project reviews should become standardised practices. Knowledge-sharing

platforms will capture and disseminate insights. Recognising failures alongside successes will normalise intelligent risk-taking, and learning velocity will accelerate throughout the organisation.

Deepen stakeholder relationships to reflect long-term mutual benefit instead of a transactional exchange. Customer partnerships should extend beyond current contracts to include capability development. Supplier relationships must involve investments in their sustainability. Community engagement should create shared value, and investor relations should emphasise long-term value creation.

Expand the integration of the Solidarity Fund to demonstrate how business success and societal contributions mutually reinforce each other. Employee volunteer programmes should connect daily work to a broader impact. Sharing beneficiary stories will inspire continued commitment, while impact measurement demonstrates the return on social investment.

Prepare for leadership transitions to ensure the evolution from founder to foundation. Document decision-making principles to enable consistency without rigidity. Train multiple leaders capable of carrying forward the vision. Create cultural artefacts that preserve essential stories and values. Design renewal mechanisms to prevent organisational rigidity.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Conduct quarterly “eternity audits” assessing whether recent decisions and actions align with long-term legacy building. Celebrate examples where short-term sacrifice yielded long-term benefit. Build confidence that an eternal perspective creates sustainable success.

Managing Risks and Maintaining Momentum

Implementation inevitably encounters obstacles that test our commitment to an eternal perspective. Anticipating common challenges enables a proactive response, helping to maintain momentum even through difficulties.

One of the most common threats is financial pressure. When results lag, voices may arise advocating for the abandonment of long-term investments in favour of immediate gains. To counter this, establish clear thresholds that differentiate between temporary setbacks and fundamental strategy questions. Maintain reserve funds to enable continued investment in capabilities during downturns. Additionally, document how previous long-term investments have yielded returns; this can help leaders resist short-term pressures.

Leadership changes also create vulnerabilities. New leaders may not share the same eternal perspective and may feel pressured to prove themselves through quick wins. Mitigate this risk by implementing robust succession planning that ensures alignment of values. Create transition protocols that include immersion in the organisation's history and principles of eternity. Establish mentorship programmes that connect new leaders with the organisation's culture keepers.

Market disruptions pose challenges to assumed futures. New technologies can render existing capabilities obsolete. Competitors may introduce new business models, and regulatory shifts can fundamentally change the landscape. To respond effectively, focus on timeless human needs rather than specific solutions. Maintain organisational agility to enable rapid adaptation and view disruptions as opportunities for principled flexibility.

Cultural resistance can emerge, particularly in established operations. Long-serving employees may perceive changes as implicit criticism of past approaches. Address this by showing respect for past contributions while explaining that the evolving context requires new responses. Engage resisters as culture translators to help express eternal principles in familiar terms.

Integration challenges arise when acquired companies join an organisation. Different cultures and practices can create friction, leading to conflicts between the need for standardisation and the importance of local adaptation. Navigate these challenges through patient cultural assimilation, identifying essential alignments versus acceptable variations. Focus integration efforts on shared values and desired outcomes rather than imposing uniform processes.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Create a “risk sensing network” that incorporates diverse perspectives to monitor implementation challenges. Meet monthly to review early warning signs and adjust approaches. Maintain optimism whilst honestly acknowledging difficulties.



CONCLUSION

The Legacy We Author

PURPOSEFUL TODAY, ENDURING ALWAYS

As I complete these reflections on eternity, I return to that moment in 1985 when everything began. Standing before that struggling company, I could not foresee the global organisation we would become. Yet, something in that moment contained the seeds of all that was to follow. The commitment to human potential, the belief in principled business, and the determination to build something meaningful all present from the start.

This is eternity's deepest teaching: what matters most exists not in grand strategies or distant futures but in present choices aligned with timeless values. Every day, through countless decisions large and small, we author the legacy we leave. The eternal exists only in the now, yet present actions create future realities.

The three metamorphoses provide practical wisdom for this authoring. The Camel teaches us that accepting worthy challenges builds strength and serves future achievements. The Lion shows us that breaking unnecessary limitations creates space for authentic contribution. The Child reveals joy in creation, generating energy to sustain effort across difficulties.

But these are not stages to complete sequentially. They are capacities to embody simultaneously. In any given week, we must bear necessary burdens with Camel patience, challenge outdated constraints with Lion courage, and create new possibilities with Child innocence. Mastery means moving fluidly between modes as situations require.

The paradox of building for eternity while remaining adaptable is resolved through the understanding that they enable each other. Strong values provide confidence for bold experimentation. Successful adaptation reinforces the relevance of core principles. Like the double helix of our imagery, permanence and change intertwine, creating patterns of enduring evolution.

The Synthesis We Achieve

What we seek is not mere corporate longevity but perpetual relevance. Not just surviving time but serving human needs across time. Not just maintaining what was, but continuously becoming what's needed. This requires sophisticated integration of multiple capabilities rarely combined.

We should be traditionalists who value accumulated wisdom while also being innovators who create new possibilities. We must be idealists, pursuing noble purposes, while also being pragmatists who achieve concrete results. We need to be individualists who respect human uniqueness and communitarians who build collective strength.

This synthesis cannot be achieved by simply seeking a middle ground between extremes. Instead, we must develop the capacity to fully express seemingly opposing ideas. We need to fully commit to preservation, which will allow us the freedom to innovate. We should uphold total respect for individual dignity while fostering genuine team unity. Furthermore, we must maintain absolute ethical principles while allowing for infinite tactical flexibility.

Years of building Altrad taught me that such synthesis is possible. We've maintained an entrepreneurial spirit whilst developing institutional capability. We've honoured local cultures whilst building global coherence. We've served shareholder interests whilst nurturing all stakeholders. Not perfectly, but genuinely, proving integrated success achievable.

The key to overcoming challenges lies in having a transcendent purpose, which provides context that reconciles seemingly opposing ideas. When we make decisions based on the principle of "Building a Sustainable World", trade-offs become opportunities for creativity. We should ask ourselves: How can our choices meet both immediate needs and long-term sustainability goals? How can we achieve profit while also contributing to human flourishing? These questions foster innovative solutions that conventional either/or thinking often overlooks.

→ **Final Managerial Implication:** Write your own synthesis statement describing how you personally integrate seemingly opposite aspects in your leadership. Share with your team, inviting their observations about when you succeed and when you struggle with integration. Model the vulnerability enabling growth.

What We Leave Behind

Legacy is not what we inscribe in stone but what we embed in culture. Not the monuments we build but the capabilities we develop. Not the wealth we accumulate but the opportunities we create. Every interaction either strengthens or weakens the foundation upon which others build.

I think of the maintenance supervisor who joined us in 1987, learned our values through practice, not preaching, and now teaches them across continents. Her legacy multiplies through every person she develops. I think of the engineer who questioned why scaffolding design hadn't evolved, led innovation improving safety whilst reducing costs, and transformed industry standards. His legacy lives in every worker returning home safely.

These individual legacies weave together, creating an institutional fabric stronger than any thread. Thousands of such contributions accumulate into organisational character

transcending any individual tenure. This is how institutions become truly eternal: not through preservation but through continuous regeneration.

The digital age creates new forms of legacy through preserved knowledge and extended connections. But technology only amplifies what humans create. The most sophisticated systems cannot replace wisdom earned through experience, values demonstrated through behaviour, or relationships built through trust.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Document not just decisions but their underlying reasoning. Future leaders need to understand why choices were made, not merely what was chosen. Create systems capturing context alongside content.

THE ALTRAD SOLIDARITY ENDOWMENT FUND: ETERNITY IN ACTION

When establishing the Altrad Solidarity Endowment Fund, we created a tangible expression of eternal thinking. This fund represents more than charitable giving; it embodies our commitment to building what outlasts the company itself. Through education support, healthcare initiatives, and community development, we invest in human potential spanning generations.

The Fund operates on principles mirroring our business philosophy. We don't merely provide resources; we build capabilities. We don't create dependencies; we enable independence. We don't impose solutions; we support locally driven initiatives, understanding that communities best know their own needs.

Consider our scholarship programme supporting engineering students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Beyond financial assistance, we provide mentorship, internship opportunities, and connection to our values. These students become not just skilled professionals but carriers of our commitment to building sustainable futures. Many now lead transformation in their communities, multiplying impact beyond our direct reach.

Healthcare initiatives focus on preventive care and capability building rather than merely treating symptoms. By training local healthcare workers and establishing sustainable clinics, we create enduring infrastructure that serves communities long after the initial investment. This approach reflects Child-stage wisdom: building for joy of creation and future benefit rather than immediate recognition.

Community development projects emphasise collaboration and local ownership. When supporting school construction in remote areas, we involve entire communities in planning and implementation. This ensures facilities meet genuine needs whilst building local capacity for maintenance and expansion. The schools become community assets, not corporate monuments.

The fund's governance structure ensures continuity beyond current leadership. Independent trustees include community representatives, ensuring decisions reflect stakeholder needs rather than corporate convenience. Endowment structure provides perpetual funding independent of business cycles. This institutional design embodies eternal thinking: creating systems that function beyond the founders.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Consider how your department's activities could create lasting community benefit. Even operational functions can incorporate social value. Procurement can prioritise local suppliers. Training can include community members. Facilities can serve dual purposes.

BUILDING ETERNAL TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Technology presents both opportunities and challenges for eternal thinking. Digital tools can preserve and transmit knowledge across time and space, but they can also create dependencies and vulnerabilities undermining long-term resilience. The key lies in approaching technology as a servant of human purpose rather than a master.

Our digital transformation is guided by principles that ensure technology strengthens, rather than replaces, human connections. When implementing project management systems, we design them to amplify collaboration rather than automate it away. When deploying AI for safety monitoring, we position it as augmenting human judgement rather than replacing it.

Data governance becomes an ethical imperative when building for eternity. Every piece of information we collect about employees, customers, or communities represents trust requiring careful stewardship. We must balance transparency that enables innovation with privacy that protects dignity. This balance cannot be achieved through policies alone but requires embedding ethical consideration into every technology decision.

Consider our approach to artificial intelligence adoption. Rather than pursuing AI for efficiency alone, we evaluate each application against three criteria: Does it enhance human capability? Does it respect human dignity? Does it serve our eternal purpose? This framework led us to invest heavily in AI supporting safety prediction whilst rejecting applications that would have reduced human employment without creating new opportunities.

The concept of digital legacy extends beyond corporate systems to individual contributions. We create platforms where employees can document innovations, share lessons learned, and preserve institutional memory. But we design these systems, encouraging active engagement rather than passive archiving. Knowledge lives through application, not mere storage.

Cybersecurity becomes a form of institutional resilience when viewed through an eternal lens. Protecting digital assets means safeguarding not just current operations but accumulated knowledge and relationships. Every security measure represents a commitment to stakeholders trusting us with their data and depending on our systems.

→ **Managerial Implication:** When evaluating new technologies, create assessment criteria including long-term human impact alongside immediate operational benefits. Involve diverse stakeholders to ensure that multiple perspectives inform decisions.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNANCE IN PERPETUAL RENEWAL

Governance structures designed for quarterly reporting often conflict with eternal thinking. We must reimagine governance as stewardship spanning generations rather than

mere compliance satisfying regulations. This requires fundamental shifts in how boards operate, executives are evaluated, and decisions are made.

Our board composition reflects a commitment to long-term thinking. We include members bringing not just industry expertise but philosophical depth and genuine care for sustainable development. Board discussions allocate significant time to legacy considerations alongside financial performance. We ask: How will decisions made today be judged in twenty years?

Executive compensation structures balance immediate results with long-term value creation. Performance metrics include capability development, cultural strengthening, and sustainable practice adoption alongside traditional financial measures. This ensures leaders cannot achieve personal success at the expense of institutional health.

Risk management expands beyond protecting assets to preserving capacity for regeneration. We evaluate risks not just by probability and impact but by effect on our ability to fulfil our eternal purpose. Reputational risks threatening stakeholder trust receive equal weight with operational risks affecting efficiency.

Succession planning becomes a sacred responsibility when building for eternity. We develop multiple leadership generations simultaneously, ensuring wisdom transfers alongside authority. Leadership development programmes emphasise philosophical understanding and value embodiment alongside technical competence.

The governance calendar institutionalises long-term thinking through regular reviews of multigenerational impact. Annual strategy sessions begin with a 20-year vision before addressing immediate priorities. Quarterly reviews include progress on capability building and cultural indicators alongside financial results.

Transparency serves both accountability and inspiration. We communicate not just what we've achieved but why it matters for long-term legacy. Stakeholder reports include stories of human development alongside financial statements. This transparency builds trust whilst educating stakeholders about our eternal perspective.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Structure team meetings to include discussion of long-term impact alongside immediate priorities. Ask regularly: “How does this decision serve our grandchildren’s generation?”

GLOBAL PRINCIPLES, LOCAL WISDOM

Building global organisations with an eternal perspective requires a delicate balance between universal principles and local adaptation. Like rivers maintaining essential character whilst adapting to terrain, we must flow through diverse contexts without losing identity.

The tension between standardisation and localisation resolves through understanding what must remain constant versus what should adapt. Core values—courage, humility, respect, solidarity, conviviality—translate across cultures, though their expression varies. Our safety commitment remains absolute whilst safety practices reflect local conditions and regulations.

Our experience integrating acquisitions across continents taught valuable lessons about cultural sensitivity. Initial attempts to impose uniform systems created resistance and

destroyed local wisdom accumulated over decades. We learned instead to identify essential principles whilst respecting established practices serving local needs effectively.

Consider our Middle Eastern operations, where relationship-building follows different rhythms than European contexts. Rather than imposing Western meeting structures, we adapted to local customs whilst maintaining commitment to transparency and ethical dealing. This respect for local wisdom has strengthened rather than weakened our culture.

The “glocal” approach requires sophisticated leadership capable of holding paradox. Leaders must be both guardians of global standards and champions of local innovation. They must ensure consistency without enforcing conformity. This requires a deep understanding of both universal principles and cultural contexts.

Language presents particular challenges and opportunities. Whilst English serves as a common business language, we encourage multilingual communication, recognising that values and wisdom are often expressed most powerfully in mother tongues. Important documents translate not just words but underlying meanings, ensuring concepts resonate across linguistic boundaries.

Knowledge sharing across regions enriches our collective wisdom. Solutions developed for Australian mining operations inspire innovations in European construction. Safety practices from offshore platforms enhance onshore site management. This cross-pollination occurs because we maintain a common language of values whilst celebrating diverse approaches.

→ **Managerial Implication:** When working across cultures, invest time in understanding local contexts before proposing changes. Ask local teams to teach you their wisdom before sharing yours. Build bridges between global standards and local excellence.

CREATING PERPETUAL INNOVATION CAPACITY

Innovation serving eternity differs from innovation chasing trends. We seek breakthrough improvements in fundamental human needs rather than superficial novelties. This requires patience, accepting longer development cycles whilst maintaining urgency around safety and sustainability improvements.

Our innovation philosophy balances three horizons simultaneously. Horizon One focuses on continuous improvement of existing services—making scaffolding safer, access solutions more efficient, and protective systems more reliable. These incremental innovations accumulate into substantial progress over time.

Horizon Two explores adjacent possibilities where our capabilities create new value. Digital twin technology for infrastructure planning, predictive maintenance using IoT sensors, and modular construction systems represent natural extensions of core competencies. These innovations bridge current operations with future possibilities.

Horizon Three investigates transformational changes that could redefine our industry. We conduct research into biodegradable scaffolding materials, AI-designed access solutions optimising for safety and efficiency simultaneously, and circular economy approaches to equipment life cycle management. These investigations may not yield immediate returns but position us for fundamental transitions ahead.

Innovation governance ensures balance across horizons whilst maintaining ethical boundaries. We evaluate innovations not just for technical feasibility and commercial viability but for alignment with eternal purpose. Does this innovation serve human flourishing? Does it respect environmental limits? Does it strengthen or weaken our values?

Failure becomes a teacher rather than an enemy when pursuing innovation with an eternal perspective. We document lessons from unsuccessful experiments as carefully as we celebrate successes. This accumulated learning becomes an institutional asset guiding future efforts. Each failure brings us closer to breakthroughs by eliminating unproductive paths.

Partnership approaches reflect long-term thinking. Rather than extracting value from technology partners or academic collaborators, we build mutually beneficial relationships spanning decades. These partnerships create innovation ecosystems where ideas flow freely and success multiplies rather than divides.

→ **Managerial Implication:** Allocate time and resources across all three innovation horizons. Protect long-term research from short-term pressure whilst ensuring continuous improvement never stops. Create safe spaces for experimentation where learning matters more than immediate success.

CONCLUSION: THE ETERNAL MOMENT OF CHOICE

As I write these words, I am conscious that they do not represent a conclusion but a continuation. Every ending becomes a beginning when building for eternity. What we call conclusion merely marks a transition from reflection to action, from understanding to implementation, from individual contemplation to collective creation.

The journey through Nietzsche's metamorphoses—from Camel's burden-bearing through Lion's liberation to Child's creative joy—maps both personal and organisational evolution. Yet these stages don't represent linear progression but cyclical renewal. We must sometimes return to the Camel's discipline, rediscover the Lion's courage, and reconnect with the Child's wonder. Eternity emerges from this conscious navigation between stages as circumstances require.

The Call to Daily Eternity

Eternity is not a distant goal but a present choice. Every decision we make today either strengthens or weakens the foundations that others will build upon tomorrow. When a safety supervisor insists on following proper procedures despite pressure from the schedule, she helps create a lasting impact. When a project manager takes time to mentor a junior colleague, he builds a legacy. When an administrator suggests process improvements that better serve stakeholders, she plays a role in shaping the future.

These moments of choice accumulate like grains of sand, forming mighty dunes. While no single grain may seem significant, together they create landscapes that influence future generations. Similarly, our daily decisions combine to create an organisational character that endures beyond any individual contribution.

The eternal recurrence test serves as a practical guide: If this action were repeated infinitely, would it create a world we want to inhabit? This question transforms routine

decisions into moral choices. It connects immediate pressures to lasting consequences and reminds us that we shape the future through our present choices.

→ **Personal Reflection Exercise:** At each day's end, identify three decisions you made. Apply the eternal recurrence test to each. How would infinite repetition of these choices shape the world? What would you choose differently tomorrow?

The Paradox Resolved

Throughout this exploration, we've grappled with apparent tension between adaptability and permanence. The resolution lies not in choosing one over the other but in understanding their interdependence. Adaptability without purpose becomes drift. Purpose without adaptability becomes rigidity. Together, they create dynamic stability, enabling organisations to flow like rivers—constantly moving yet essentially consistent.

This paradox resolution requires sophisticated thinking comfortable with “both/and” rather than “either/or” logic. We must be both profitable and purposeful, efficient and humane, global and local, innovative and traditional. These paired aspirations don't conflict when we understand that each enables the other at a deeper level.

The double helix metaphor captures this essential insight. Our adaptability strand and eternity strand don't merely coexist—they actively strengthen each other through their intertwining. Each turn of the helix represents growth through time, neither strand dominating, but both essential for structural integrity.

The Multigenerational Covenant

Building for eternity establishes an implicit covenant with future generations. We commit to leaving the organisation and world better than we found them. This covenant cannot be legally enforced but carries moral weight transcending any contract.

Future generations will judge us not by quarterly earnings but by quarterly centuries—how our decisions shaped possibilities across extended time. They will ask whether we consumed or created, whether we extracted or invested, whether we served ourselves or served humanity's continuing story.

This multigenerational perspective transforms how we evaluate success. Short-term sacrifice for long-term benefit becomes rational rather than idealistic. Investment in capabilities that won't mature for decades makes sense when thinking in generations rather than quarters. Environmental stewardship becomes self-interest properly understood.

The Living Testament

Altrad's eternity won't be found in archived documents or preserved artefacts but in the living testimony of people whose lives we've touched and capabilities we've developed. Every person trained in our apprentice programmes carries forward our commitment to excellence. Every community served by the infrastructure we helped build experiences our values in action. Every innovation improving worker safety extends our protective purpose.

This living testament multiplies beyond calculation. The engineer we train teaches dozens throughout her career. The safety standards we pioneer influence entire industries.

The sustainable practices we demonstrate inspire competitors and partners alike. Impact ripples outward through human networks in ways no algorithm can track.

Understanding legacy as a living testament rather than a static monument fundamentally changes our approach. We focus on planting seeds rather than building statues. We invest in capabilities rather than mere capacities. We measure success by what continues growing rather than by what remains unchanged.

The Practical Mandate

This text and the insights shared in the upcoming seminar hold no value without proper implementation. Understanding without action is far more detrimental than ignorance, as it squanders the potential of the knowledge gained. Therefore, I challenge every reader, whether you are an executive or an engineer, an administrator or an apprentice, to transform these concepts into tangible commitments.

For senior leaders: Review each major decision from an eternal perspective. Ask how your choices contribute to long-term value creation for future generations. Design governance structures that balance immediate needs with long-term goals. Model your values consistently, especially under pressure. Invest in capabilities that will compound over time. Share stories that connect daily work to a lasting purpose.

For middle managers: Create an environment of psychological safety that encourages innovation and honesty. Regularly connect your team members' work to the organisation's purpose.

Balance short-term deliverables with long-term development goals. Document lessons learned alongside data. Foster collaboration that crosses departmental boundaries. Celebrate decisions made in alignment with core values, even when they come at a cost.

For every employee: Recognise the eternal significance of your work. Share your knowledge generously with others. Mentor your colleagues, whether formally or informally. Suggest improvements that better serve stakeholders. Choose courage when facing ethical dilemmas. Build relationships that go beyond mere transactions. Aim to leave every interaction better than you found it.

For all of us: Remember that eternity begins now. We do not need to wait for the perfect moments or ideal circumstances. Every day presents opportunities to create lasting value. Every interaction provides a chance to share wisdom. Each challenge invites us to demonstrate our values under pressure.

The Eternal Now

As this text and the seminar conclude, a new chapter begins. You return to daily responsibilities carrying a fresh perspective on their eternal significance. The test comes not in conference rooms but on construction sites, not in presentations but in practice, not in words but in deeds.

I think of you facing difficult decisions in the coming months. Market pressures will suggest compromises. Technological changes will demand adaptation. Personnel challenges will test patience. In these moments, remember: You are not merely solving today's problems but shaping tomorrow's possibilities. You are not just managing resources but stewarding legacy.

The eternal perspective doesn't make decisions easier but clarifies what matters. When facing trade-offs between short-term gain and long-term value, the choice becomes clear. When choosing between preserving the status quo and pioneering improvement, courage leads the way. When balancing stakeholder interests, inclusive wisdom guides resolution.

The Continuing Story

Altrad's story continues through each of us. We are not the conclusion but a current chapter in a narrative that extends beyond our time here. Future generations will read our chapter based on the consequences of our choices. What story will they find?

Will they discover an organisation that faced disruption with wisdom, adapting while maintaining its identity? Will they see leaders who chose the difficult right over the easy wrong? Will they find a culture where every person's contribution matters and every stakeholder's welfare is considered? Will they inherit the capabilities that enable them to face their own challenges with confidence?

These questions answer themselves through our daily actions. We write Altrad's continuing story not with pens but through our practices, not with proclamations but with persistence, and not with monuments but through mentorship.

The Final Paradox

The deepest paradox of eternity lies in its immediacy. We cannot reach tomorrow except through today. We cannot build a legacy without making choices in the present. We cannot create lasting value without taking current action. Eternity exists not in the distant future but in the eternal now of conscious choice.

This immediacy makes eternity accessible to everyone, regardless of their position or power. The apprentice learning proper safety procedures is contributing to eternity. The accountant ensuring financial integrity helps maintain eternity. The executive who chooses long-term value over short-term gain is shaping eternity. Each person authors eternity through their sphere of influence.

Understanding this democratises the creation of legacy. Eternity becomes not just the privilege of founders and executives, but a birthright of every individual who chooses to build rather than merely consume, to contribute rather than merely extract, and to serve rather than merely succeed.

The Dawn of Possibility

As the desert dawn brings new possibilities after the darkest night, this text and the upcoming seminar mark the beginning of renewed purpose. You carry forward not a burden but an opportunity. You bear not the weight of expectation but wings of possibility. You face not the constraint of tradition but the freedom to create tradition worth preserving.

The sun rises on Altrad's ongoing journey. Over the past forty years, we have transformed from a single struggling company into a global force for good. The next forty years will be determined by the choices we make today. The century ahead will rely on

the foundations we establish now. The future millennium will depend on the values we instil permanently.

Yet we need not be overwhelmed by temporal vastness. Eternity builds through moments. Legacy accumulates through decisions. Purpose is fulfilled through practices. We need only do what lies before us with consciousness of its lasting significance.

The Eternal Invitation

Therefore, I invite you—no, I challenge you—to see your work through eternal eyes. Whatever your role, however routine your tasks, regardless of your tenure, you hold the power to build lasting value. You possess the capability to strengthen the foundations others will stand upon. You carry responsibility for choices whose consequences ripple through time.

This invitation extends beyond mere professional obligations; it calls for personal transformation. Striving to become a person worthy of eternal recurrence, someone whose life is fit for infinite repetition without regret, represents the highest achievement for humankind. When we cultivate identities that we would choose to embody forever, we create selves that are deserving of eternity.

However, this invitation also involves risk. Building a life meant for eternity often requires sacrificing immediate gratification. It demands that we choose the more challenging paths, even when the easier options tempt us. It insists on adherence to truth when deception is appealing.

It calls for faith that doing what is right will ultimately prove beneficial, even when the evidence takes time to materialise.

Yet what alternative exists? Building only for quarters condemns us to quarterly existence. Serving only immediate needs leaves us eternally hungry. Pursuing only material success creates spiritual poverty. We are beings built for eternity; denying this nature diminishes us.

The Closing Circle

Where we began, we end—yet transformed by the journey in between. We started recognising tension between adaptability and permanence. We discovered they dance together rather than fight. We learned that serving eternity requires embracing change, whilst meaningful change requires eternal purpose.

The circle closes, but the spiral continues upward. Each revolution brings deeper understanding and higher capability. What seemed paradoxical reveals itself as a partnership. What appeared as a constraint becomes liberation. What felt like a burden transforms into privilege.

As you return to work, carry this understanding with you: the scaffolding you design not only supports today's construction but also shapes the communities of tomorrow. The safety standards you uphold protect not just current workers; they also set expectations that will benefit millions in the future. The relationships you build foster networks of trust, allowing for achievements that go beyond our imagination.

The Living Legacy

As I near my own journey's end, I see clearly that Altrad's true legacy lives not in achievements I can claim but in potential you will realise. Every person reading these words carries forward possibilities I cannot envision. Every team applying these principles creates value that I cannot measure. Every innovation inspired by eternal thinking generates benefits I cannot foresee.

This is the true nature of legacy. It multiplies beyond the founder's imagination through others' contributions. It evolves beyond the original vision through collective wisdom. It endures beyond an individual lifetime through institutional vitality. It matters beyond material measures, as it enables human flourishing.

I think of Altrad centuries hence. I cannot see its specific form but trust its essential character. I know it will face challenges we cannot imagine using tools we cannot conceive. Yet I believe it will meet these challenges with courage, humility, respect, solidarity, and conviviality because these values transcend context.

I see leaders then reading these words—not as historical curiosity but as living wisdom. They will translate eternal principles into their contemporary context just as we translate ancient wisdom into ours. They will face their paradoxes with the same tools we employ: consciousness, choice, and commitment.

The Ultimate Measure

How then should we measure success in building eternity? Not by longevity alone, as many organisations persist without purpose. Not by size alone, because growth without meaning is merely elaborate emptiness. Not by profits alone, as financial success without human development impoverishes everything.

We measure success by ripples extending from every choice. By capabilities multiplying through generations. By communities strengthened through our service. By lives enhanced through opportunity. By problems solved through innovation. By suffering prevented through safety. By potential unlocked through development. By hope created through achievement.

These measures are hard to quantify, yet they remain significant. They are reflected in the thankful messages from workers whose lives we have improved. They can be seen in the thriving communities built around the infrastructure we have developed. They are evident in the innovations spreading throughout various industries, raising standards everywhere. They can also be seen in young people uncovering new possibilities through our programmes. Lastly, they are felt by the families supported by the meaningful employment we provide.

Ultimate proof comes when someone says: "Altrad made this possible". Not through charity but through capability. Not through dependence but through development. Not through extraction but through enablement. When our existence creates conditions for others' flourishing, we achieve eternal significance.

THE FINAL WORDS

As the ink dries on these pages, its message embarks on an extraordinary journey through time. From my hand to your eyes, from your understanding to your actions, and from your examples to others' inspiration, wisdom traverses pathways beyond our mapping, igniting trust along the way.

I end where we began—with you. You who chose to join an organisation are pursuing more than profit. You who demonstrate values under pressure daily. You who build tomorrow through today's decisions. You who carry forward a flame lit decades ago into futures we cannot see.

The Bedouin boy who became a builder learned life's essential lesson: We exist not for ourselves alone but for what we enable in others. This lesson scales from individual to institution. Altrad exists not for itself but for the human potential it unlocks, for communities it serves, for futures it enables.

Take then these thoughts not as final answers but as continuing questions. How will you build eternity through daily work? How will you strengthen others while adapting yourself? How will you preserve the essential while transforming the peripheral? How will you author a legacy worth eternal recurrence?

The sunrise calls us to a new day's work. The horizon beckons with possibilities. The foundation stands ready for building. The future waits for creation. The eternal moment of choice arrives again and again and again.

Build well. Build consciously. Build together. Build for those who follow. Build as if every action echoes through eternity—because it does.

In courage, humility, respect, solidarity, and conviviality, let us continue building the sustainable world that represents our eternal purpose. The work never ends. The possibility never exhausts. The meaning never diminishes.

This is Altrad's way. This is your invitation. This is our shared eternity. Now, go forth and build.

MOHED ALTRAD 2026



APPENDIXES



APPENDIX I

Building Your Personal and Professional Legacy: An Appendix for Altrad Seminar 2026

INTRODUCTION. YOUR JOURNEY TOWARD ETERNITY BEGINS TODAY

Within Altrad's constellation of 72,000 professionals across various countries lies a fundamental truth: while the organisation pursues its eternal mission of building a sustainable world, each individual simultaneously constructs their own legacy, a personal eternity that intertwines with, enriches, and ultimately transcends their professional journey. This appendix serves as a practical guide to building a meaningful personal legacy while contributing to Altrad's enduring mission.

The path ahead requires embracing what Nietzsche called the fundamental human capacity for transformation, not once, but continuously throughout your career. Like Altrad itself, which has evolved from a small scaffolding company to a global force for sustainable development, your personal journey involves cycles of learning, challenging conventions, and creating new value. This document provides the philosophical framework and practical tools to navigate that journey intentionally, creating what Mohamed Altrad calls "something lasting, something to be proud of".

PART I. THE THREE METAMORPHOSES OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL SELF

Understanding your transformational journey

Friedrich Nietzsche's three metamorphoses, the Camel, the Lion, and the Child, provide a powerful framework for understanding professional development within Altrad's context. These aren't simply career stages but modes of being that you'll cycle through repeatedly, each time at deeper levels of understanding and impact.

- **The Camel phase** represents your capacity to bear responsibility and absorb knowledge. In Altrad's decentralised structure, this means taking on the weight of expertise in your domain, whether that's mastering technical skills in nuclear services, understanding complex client needs in oil and gas, or navigating the intricacies of sustainable construction. The Camel demonstrates humility, one of Altrad's five core values, by acknowledging what must be learned and carried forward. Early in your career, you might spend years in this phase, building competence and earning trust. But even senior leaders return to the Camel when entering new markets or facing unprecedented challenges like the energy transition.
- **The Lion phase** emerges when you've gained sufficient strength to challenge existing paradigms. This is where courage, another core Altrad value, becomes essential. The Lion says "no" to outdated processes, inefficient systems, and limiting beliefs. Within Altrad's "green zone" of subsidiary autonomy, the Lion energy enables you to reject what doesn't serve the mission and clear space for innovation. This might manifest as challenging traditional approaches to safety protocols, proposing new sustainable technologies, or restructuring teams for greater effectiveness. The Lion doesn't destroy recklessly but clears ground purposefully, making room for what's next.
- **The Child phase** represents creative renewal and the capacity to build anew. This is where true legacy creation happens, not through opposition but through playful innovation and a fresh perspective. The Child embodies conviviality, creating environments where teams thrive through genuine connection and shared purpose. In this phase, you're not just solving problems but reimagining what's possible. You might develop entirely new service lines, create knowledge-sharing systems that outlast your tenure, or mentor the next generation in ways that multiply your impact exponentially.

Navigating your metamorphoses within Altrad

Your journey through these metamorphoses isn't solitary; it happens within Altrad's ecosystem of values and relationships. Solidarity means supporting others through their transformations while receiving support through yours. Respect ensures that each phase is honoured, whether you're a Camel learning from senior colleagues, a Lion challenging the status quo, or a Child creating new possibilities.

Consider how these metamorphoses apply to your current role. Are you primarily in learning mode, accumulating expertise and understanding? Are you ready to challenge certain aspects of how work is done? Or are you in a position to create entirely new approaches and systems? Most likely, you're experiencing all three simultaneously in different aspects of your work. The key is recognising which energy is needed when, and developing the flexibility to shift between modes intentionally.

PART II. ETERNAL RECURRENCE AS YOUR PROFESSIONAL COMPASS

Making decisions that echo through time

Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence offers a profound decision-making framework: imagine living your exact professional life infinite times. Every project, every interaction, every choice repeated endlessly. This isn't about perfection but about alignment, ensuring your actions reflect values you'd willingly embrace for eternity.

Within Altrad's context, this means asking yourself: Would I make this safety decision the same way an infinite number of times, knowing its impact on colleagues and their families? Would I approach this client relationship with the same integrity if I had to repeat it forever? Would I invest this same energy in developing my team if I knew the ripple effects would echo endlessly?

This framework transforms mundane decisions into legacy moments. When you document a process thoroughly, knowing it will guide colleagues long after you've moved on, you're creating a trace rather than noise. When you mentor someone patiently, understanding they'll pass those lessons to others, you're building chains of impact that extend beyond measurement. When you choose the sustainable solution over the expedient one, you're voting for the world you want to see reproduced infinitely.

Building your personal eternity within organisational eternity

While Altrad as an organisation seeks its own form of eternity through sustainable business practices and multigenerational thinking, your personal eternity operates on multiple levels at once. You're creating biological eternity through the professionals you develop and mentor and your intellectual offspring who carry forward your approaches and values. You're building creative eternity through the systems, processes, and innovations that outlast your direct involvement. You're contributing to nature's eternity by participating in Altrad's sustainability mission, helping to preserve the planet for future generations.

The beauty of working within Altrad lies in how these eternities reinforce each other. Your personal legacy strengthens organisational culture, which enables greater collective impact, which provides more opportunities for individual meaning-making. This creates what we might call a "double helix" of growth, with your development and Altrad's evolution intertwining and strengthening each other.

PART III. DEFINING AND BUILDING YOUR LEGACY VISION

The architecture of personal legacy

Building a meaningful legacy requires both philosophical grounding and practical planning. Begin by clarifying your core values and examining how they align with Altrad's five values. This isn't about forcing alignment but discovering authentic connections. Perhaps your personal value of innovation connects with courage. Maybe your commitment to fairness resonates with respect. Or your belief in collective success mirrors solidarity.

Exercise: Your Legacy Statement

Take 30 minutes to complete this guided reflection:

1. **Imagine your retirement celebration at Altrad.** Colleagues from across your career have gathered together. What would you want them to say about your impact? Not your titles or achievements, but how you changed their professional lives?

2. **Identify your unique contribution.** What can you offer that no one else can in quite the same way? This might be technical expertise, cultural bridging, innovative thinking, or exceptional relationship building.

3. **Define your multiplier effect.** How will your work continue creating value after you're gone? Through people you've trained? Systems you've created? Problems you've solved permanently?

4. **Write your legacy statement** using this template: "I will [action] for [beneficiaries] to [impact] by [method], leaving behind [lasting contribution]".

Example: "I will develop safety innovations for field teams across Altrad to prevent injuries and save lives by combining technical expertise with frontline insights, leaving behind a culture where every person feels personally responsible for collective safety".

Creating your legacy roadmap

Your legacy isn't built in grand gestures but in consistent daily actions aligned with long-term vision. Design your roadmap across three horizons:

Horizon 1: Foundation (Years 1–5)

Focus on building expertise and credibility. Master your craft, whether that's project management, technical engineering, client relations, or operational excellence. Document your learning journey, creating resources others can use. Begin mentoring informally, sharing knowledge generously. Identify the aspects of Altrad's mission that most resonate with your values.

Horizon 2: Expansion (Years 6–15)

Leverage your expertise to create a broader impact. Lead cross-functional initiatives that break down silos. Develop formal mentoring relationships, potentially across different Altrad subsidiaries. Create systems and processes that improve how work gets done. Challenge outdated approaches while respecting what works. Build your professional brand as someone who combines competence with character.

Horizon 3: Transcendence (Year 16 and beyond)

Focus on multiplication rather than addition. Develop leaders who develop leaders. Create frameworks and philosophies that others can adapt and apply. Serve as both a cultural guardian and catalyst for evolution. Share wisdom through teaching, writing, and modelling. Prepare succession thoughtfully, ensuring continuity while enabling fresh perspectives.

PART IV. PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR LEGACY BUILDING

Your personal board of directors

Building a legacy requires guidance from those who've walked similar paths and from those heading where you aspire to go. Construct your personal board of directors with intention:

- **The Altrad Veteran:** Someone who deeply understands company culture and can help you navigate organisational dynamics while staying true to your values.
- **The Industry Expert:** A professional from outside Altrad who brings a fresh perspective on industry trends and possibilities.
- **The Cultural Bridge:** Given Altrad's global presence, someone who helps you work effectively across cultural boundaries.
- **The Challenger:** A trusted colleague who asks difficult questions and guards against complacency.
- **The Rising Star:** A younger professional who keeps you connected to emerging trends and perspectives. Remember, reverse mentoring enriches both parties.

Meet with each board member quarterly, even if informally. Come prepared with specific challenges and decisions. Offer value in return for connections, insights, and support for their own goals.

Knowledge management as legacy building

Your accumulated knowledge represents potential energy that only creates impact when transferred effectively. Develop a systematic approach to knowledge capture and sharing:

- **Document as you go.** Don't wait for the perfect moment to share knowledge. Create living documents that evolve with your understanding. Use Altrad's internal systems to build searchable repositories of insights, lessons learned, and best practices.
- **Teach to learn.** Offer to lead training sessions on your areas of expertise. Teaching forces clarity and often reveals gaps in your own understanding. Additionally, it multiplies your impact exponentially; one training session could influence dozens of colleagues, each of whom influences many more.
- **Create "operator's manuals"** for your roles. Document not just what you do but how you think about challenges, make decisions, and prioritise. Include relationships that matter, unwritten rules that govern success, and failures that taught valuable lessons.

The power of strategic storytelling

Stories carry wisdom more effectively than policies or procedures. Develop a collection of professional stories that illustrate your values in action:

- **The Challenge Story:** A time you faced seemingly impossible obstacles and prevailed through persistence and creativity.
- **The Failure Story:** An honest account of a mistake and the lessons it taught, demonstrating humility and a growth mind-set.
- **The Collaboration Story:** An example of achieving something through solidarity that no individual could accomplish alone.

- **The Innovation Story:** How you saw possibilities where others saw problems, embodying courage to try something new.
- **The Values Story:** A moment when you chose principles over convenience, even at personal cost.

Share these stories thoughtfully in team meetings, training sessions, and informal conversations. They become part of organisational folklore, carrying your values forward long after you've moved to new challenges.

PART V. NAVIGATING THE TENSION BETWEEN STABILITY AND CHANGE

Your double helix of continuity and evolution

Like DNA's double helix, your professional legacy needs both stable core elements and the ability to adapt. In Altrad's dynamic environment, which spans traditional industries and emerging clean energy, this balance is essential.

Your stable core consists of immutable values and principles. These might include a commitment to safety, a belief in human potential, dedication to sustainability, or a passion for technical excellence. These don't change regardless of role, location, or market conditions. They're your professional North Star, providing direction when everything else shifts.

Your adaptive capacity involves skills, methods, and approaches that evolve with circumstances. Working in Altrad's nuclear services requires different technical skills than working on hydrogen projects, but both demand the same commitment to precision and safety. Leading teams in France differs from managing operations in the Middle East, but both require respect and cultural intelligence.

The key is distinguishing between what must remain constant (values, principles, core purpose) and what should evolve (methods, skills, specific goals). This creates what researchers call "flexible stability", the ability to change while maintaining identity.

Building resilience through paradox

Altrad itself embodies numerous paradoxes: global scale with local autonomy, industrial services with environmental commitment, respect for tradition with drive for innovation. Learning to hold these paradoxes rather than resolve them builds the resilience necessary for long-term legacy building.

Embrace being simultaneously:

- **Confident and humble:** Sure of your abilities while open to learning
- **Ambitious and patient:** Pursuing bold goals while accepting gradual progress
- **Independent and collaborative:** Taking initiative while working within teams
- **Focused and flexible:** Maintaining direction while adapting to circumstances
- **Serious and playful:** Approaching work professionally while maintaining conviviality

These paradoxes aren't weaknesses but sources of strength that enable nuanced responses to complex challenges.

PART VI. GENERATIVITY AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Becoming a generative professional

Erik Erikson's concept of generativity, which involves the concern for establishing and guiding the next generation, provides a framework for understanding legacy as an active, ongoing process rather than a final achievement. Within Altrad, generativity is expressed through various channels:

- **Technical Generativity:** Advancing the state of the art in your field, whether that's developing new scaffolding systems, improving insulation techniques, or optimising maintenance procedures. Your innovations become foundations for others to build upon.
- **Cultural Generativity:** Strengthening Altrad's values-based culture through your daily actions and decisions. Every time you demonstrate courage in challenging situations, humility in success, or solidarity in difficulty, you regenerate organisational culture.
- **Relational Generativity:** Building networks and connections that outlast your direct involvement. When you introduce colleagues who later collaborate successfully, facilitate partnerships that endure, or build client relationships that span decades, you create value that compounds over time.
- **Developmental Generativity:** Investing in others' growth with no expectation of direct return. This might mean recommending someone for an opportunity you wanted, sharing credit generously, or spending extra time training someone who might never work directly with you again.

Creating knowledge bridges across generations

Altrad's multigenerational workforce presents both challenges and opportunities. As a legacy builder, you serve as a bridge between accumulated wisdom and emerging possibilities. This role requires a two-way knowledge transfer, where learning occurs simultaneously in both directions.

From senior colleagues, absorb not only technical knowledge but also professional judgement. Learn how they assess risk, build relationships, and navigate complexity. Understand the history behind current practices, including the failures that led to existing safeguards and the successes that established trusted methods. It is essential to document this tribal knowledge before it fades away.

From younger colleagues, learn about emerging technologies, changing workforce expectations, and new communication methods. Understand how digital natives approach problem solving, how sustainability concerns shape their worldview, and how they define professional success. Integrate these perspectives into your own evolving practice.

Create formal and informal mechanisms for this exchange: reverse mentoring programmes, cross-generational project teams, and knowledge-sharing sessions that value both experience and innovation. Your legacy includes not just what you know but how effectively you facilitate knowledge flow across generational boundaries.

PART VII. DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS AND MODERN LEGACY

Curating your professional digital presence

In our interconnected world, your digital footprint forms part of your legacy. Within Altrad's global operations, your digital presence can amplify impact far beyond immediate geography. Approach this strategically:

- **Internal Platforms:** Utilise Altrad's internal communication systems to share insights, celebrate others' successes, and foster a sense of community. Your contributions to internal knowledge bases, discussion forums, and collaborative platforms become searchable resources for colleagues worldwide.
- **Professional Networks:** Maintain a LinkedIn presence that reflects both your individual expertise and your role as an Altrad ambassador. Share insights about sustainable industrial services, safety innovations, or technical advances. Connect Altrad's mission to broader industry conversations.
- **Knowledge Artefacts:** Create digital artefacts that will outlast your direct involvement, such as training videos, technical guides, process documentation, and thought leadership pieces. Ensure these are properly tagged, stored, and accessible to future colleagues.

Remember that creating a digital legacy requires active curation. Regularly review and update your contributions to ensure they remain relevant and valuable. Consider appointing a "digital successor", someone who understands your work well enough to maintain and evolve your digital contributions after you move on to new challenges.

PART VIII. PRACTICAL EXERCISES FOR LEGACY BUILDING

Weekly legacy check-in (15 minutes)

Every Friday afternoon, reflect on these questions:

1. What did I do this week that will matter in a year?
2. Whom did I train or support in meaningful ways?
3. What knowledge did I capture or share?
4. How did my actions align with my legacy vision?
5. What opportunity for lasting impact did I miss, and why?

Monthly impact assessment (30 minutes)

Review your calendar from the past month and categorise activities into:

- **Legacy builders:** Activities creating lasting value
- **Maintenance work:** Necessary but not transformative
- **Noise:** Activities that seemed compelling but created no real value

Calculate your legacy ratio: the number of legacy builders divided by the total number of activities. Aim to increase this ratio by 5% each quarter, not by doing more but by doing what matters.

Quarterly legacy project review (2 hours)

Identify one project each quarter that embodies your legacy vision. This might be:

- Developing a comprehensive training programme
- Documenting critical processes
- Mentoring high-potential colleagues
- Leading a sustainability initiative
- Creating cross-functional connections

Track progress, measure impact, and document lessons learned. Build a portfolio of legacy projects that demonstrate your evolving contribution.

Annual legacy retreat (1 day)

Take one day annually to step back and assess your legacy journey:

- Review your legacy statement—does it still resonate?
- Assess progress against your three-horizon roadmap
- Update your personal board of directors
- Identify emerging opportunities for impact
- Celebrate progress while acknowledging areas for growth

The legacy interview exercise

Ask a trusted colleague to interview you about your professional journey, focusing on:

- Pivotal moments that shaped your approach
- Lessons learned from failures and successes

Altrad's Eternal Dance

- Values that guide your decisions
- Advice for someone entering your field
- Vision for your profession's future

Record this interview. It becomes both a personal artefact and a potential resource for others. Update it every few years, noting how your perspectives evolve.

PART IX. INTEGRATING YOUR LEGACY WITH ALTRAD'S ETERNAL MISSION

From personal legacy to collective impact

Your individual legacy gains meaning through connection to Altrad's larger purpose of building a sustainable world. This is not abstract corporate jargon but rather tangible impact. Every safety innovation prevents injuries, every efficiency improvement reduces environmental impact, and every client relationship enables essential infrastructure.

Consider how your specific role contributes to this eternal mission. If you work in scaffolding, you're literally building the frameworks that enable the construction of tomorrow's sustainable infrastructure. In insulation, you're reducing energy waste that contributes to climate change. In maintenance services, you're extending asset life, reducing the need for replacement and associated environmental costs.

Your legacy includes not just what you personally accomplish but what you enable others to achieve. When you improve a process that makes colleagues more effective, train someone who goes on to lead major initiatives, or build relationships that facilitate important projects, you multiply your impact exponentially.

Creating virtuous cycles

The most powerful legacies create self-reinforcing cycles that continue generating value autonomously. Within Altrad's context, this might mean:

- **Innovation Cycles:** Developing solutions that not only solve immediate problems but also establish new standards that drive industry-wide improvement.
- **Development Cycles:** Mentoring individuals who become mentors themselves, creating cascading waves of capability building.
- **Cultural Cycles:** Demonstrating values-based leadership that inspires others to do the same, strengthening organisational culture with each iteration.
- **Knowledge Cycles:** Creating documentation and training systems that not only preserve knowledge but also facilitate its continuous improvement by subsequent users.
- **Relationship Cycles:** Building partnerships based on mutual respect and shared value creation that deepen over time and survive personnel changes.

The compound effect of consistent action

Legacy isn't built through heroic one-time efforts but through consistent actions that compound over time. Throughout Altrad's 40-year history, the most impactful contributions have often come from professionals who consistently demonstrated competence, character, and commitment.

Every time you choose the harder right over the easier wrong, you strengthen organisational culture. Every time you share knowledge generously, you enhance collective capability. Every time you mentor someone patiently, you extend your impact into the future. These actions may seem small in isolation, but cumulatively they create a transformative legacy.

PART X. YOUR LEGACY ACTION PLAN

Immediate actions (This week)

1. Complete your legacy statement using the template provided (see page 102)
2. Identify three potential members for your personal board of directors
3. Document one piece of critical knowledge that only you currently possess
4. Schedule time for weekly legacy check-ins in your calendar
5. Share this appendix with a colleague who might benefit

Short-term initiatives (Next 3 months)

1. Launch one legacy project aligned with your values and Altrad's mission
2. Establish a mentoring relationship, either as a mentor or mentee
3. Create an "operator's manual" for one aspect of your role
4. Join or create a community of practice around your area of expertise
5. Begin documenting your professional stories for future sharing

Medium-term development (Next 12 months)

1. Complete your three-horizon legacy roadmap with specific milestones
2. Establish your full personal board of directors and meeting rhythm
3. Develop a knowledge management system for your accumulated insights
4. Lead a training or development initiative that multiplies your expertise
5. Assess and adjust your legacy strategy based on learning and feedback

Long-term commitment (Ongoing)

1. Maintain focus on signal over noise, regularly evaluating activity value
2. Cycle consciously through metamorphoses, embracing each phase's gifts
3. Apply eternal recurrence thinking to significant decisions
4. Build generative capacity by training others
5. Connect personal legacy to Altrad's eternal mission consistently

CONCLUSION. TRACES, NOT NOISE

In the grand symphony of Altrad's global operations, each professional contributes unique notes. Some create noise, which are temporary disturbances that fade quickly. Others leave traces, melodies that weave into the organisational score and enrich it permanently. Your choice to build a legacy represents a commitment to creating traces.

These traces take many forms: the colleague whose career you redirected through timely mentoring, the process improvement that saves countless hours, the safety innovation that prevents injuries, the client relationship that spans decades, and the cultural norm you helped establish. Each trace might seem modest individually, but collectively they compose your professional legacy.

Remember that legacy building isn't a solitary journey. Within Altrad's values of respect, solidarity, courage, humility, and conviviality, you're part of a community of professionals, each building your own legacy while contributing to collective success. Support others in their legacy journey as you hope to be supported in yours.

The path ahead requires patience, persistence, and purpose. There will be moments of doubt when immediate pressures overshadow long-term vision. In these moments, return to your core values, remember your legacy statement, and apply the eternal recurrence test: Would you choose this path infinite times?

Your professional life provides approximately 80,000 hours to make an impact. Within Altrad's mission of building a sustainable world, each hour is an opportunity to contribute to something greater than yourself. The question isn't whether you will leave a legacy; everyone does. The real question is whether that legacy will be intentional, valuable, and aligned with your core values.

As I built a global enterprise from a single struggling company, driven not by desire for wealth but by the determination to create "something lasting, something to be proud of", you too can build from wherever you stand today. Your legacy can transform lives, advance capabilities, and strengthen the cultural foundation on which Altrad's future success depends.

The three metamorphoses await: the Camel's disciplined learning, the Lion's courageous challenge, and the Child's creative renewal. The eternal recurrence test stands ready to help you choose what is worth repeating infinitely. Your personal board of directors is waiting to be assembled, your knowledge is eager to be shared, and your stories are ready to be told.

Your journey toward personal and professional legacy begins not tomorrow, not after the next promotion, not when conditions are perfect. It begins with your next decision, your next interaction, your next choice to create a trace rather than noise. Within Altrad's eternal mission, your personal eternity starts now.

What legacy will you choose to build?



APPENDIX II

Rough Waters *A Story of Transformation and Lasting Legacy*

INTRODUCTION

*“The child is innocence and forgetting,
a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel,
a first movement, a sacred Yes saying.”*

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE,
Thus Spoke Zarathustra

The story you are about to read concerns a man named Ross Mitchell. It concerns the sea, which takes without asking. It concerns the choices we make when the weight of what we have carried becomes too heavy to bear in silence. And it concerns what remains after we are gone: the traces we leave, not the noise we make.

Friedrich Nietzsche wrote of three metamorphoses of the spirit. First comes the Camel, who kneels and accepts the heaviest burdens, who crosses the desert bearing the weight of duty and expectation. Then comes the Lion, who in the loneliest desert says “I will” against the great dragon of “Thou shalt.” The Lion breaks the chains of convention and clears the ground for new creation. Finally comes the Child, innocent, beginning afresh, creating not from obligation or rebellion but from pure affirmation of what might be.

Ross Mitchell passed through all three. His story illuminates a truth central to building anything that lasts: that genuine transformation requires not merely changing what we do, but fundamentally altering who we are willing to become. And that such a transformation, when undertaken with courage and honesty, creates something beyond the self: a legacy that serves others long after we have moved on.

This is the difference between traces and noise. Noise attracts momentary attention but leaves nothing behind. Traces endure. They become woven into the fabric of how things are done, how decisions are made, how lives are protected. Steve Carter died at sea.

But because of what Ross Mitchell chose to do in the aftermath, Steve's death became something more than a tragedy to be forgotten. It became a trace that would protect others for generations.

The following narrative expands upon the screenplay "Rough Waters" to explore these themes in depth. It is fiction rooted in truth: the truth that every industry knows, every manager has felt, every person has faced when the weight of complicity becomes unbearable. Read it not as entertainment but as a mirror. Ask yourself: What burdens am I carrying? What chains need breaking? What might I create if I dared to begin again?

PART I. THE BURDEN

*“What is the heaviest thing, you heroes?
So asks the weight bearing spirit, that I may
take it upon me and rejoice in my strength.”*

NIETZSCHE

Chapter One

The locker room smelled of salt and diesel and the particular dampness that never leaves a working vessel. Ross Mitchell sat on the wooden bench and looked at the floor. He had been looking at the floor for some time. The overhead lights hummed. Water dripped somewhere behind the lockers, a slow and regular sound like a clock that measures nothing.

He was forty-three years old. He had worked the fishing fleet for twenty-two of those years, the last eight as Fleet Operations Manager for Northshore Fisheries. He knew the smell of these locker rooms the way other men know the smell of their childhood homes. He knew which boards creaked and which lockers stuck and which hooks held weight and which would pull from the wall if you trusted them with wet oilskins.

The oilskins hung in rows along the far wall. Yellow and orange, cracked at the seams, stiff with salt. The lifejackets lined the benches opposite. They were regulation orange, properly maintained, checked according to schedule. Ross had signed off on the inspection reports himself. Everything in order. Everything compliant. Everything documented.

Steve Carter’s locker was the third from the end. Ross stood and walked to it. His legs felt heavy, as though the air in the room had thickened to something that had to be pushed through. He put his hand on the locker door and felt the cold of the metal through his palm.

He opened it.

Inside, a photograph was taped to the back panel. Steve stood on a beach somewhere, smiling at the camera. His wife Rachel stood beside him. Their son Thomas sat on Steve’s shoulders, both hands gripping his father’s hair, mouth open in the particular joy of small children who have found the highest point in their world.

Ross removed the photograph carefully. The tape came away from the metal with a small sound. He held the photograph and looked at it. His thumb moved across the glossy surface, across Steve’s face, across the boy’s hands in his father’s hair.

Forty-eight hours ago, Steve Carter had been alive. Forty-eight hours ago, he had been on the deck of the Harbour Dawn when the wave came. They said it came fast. They said he was there and then he was not. They said the sea took him before anyone could reach him, before anyone could throw a line, before anyone could do anything at all.

Ross closed the locker. He put the photograph in the inside pocket of his jacket, over his heart. Then he walked out of the locker room and did not look back.

Chapter Two

The helicopter came for him at dawn. Ross watched it approach from the helipad, its rotors cutting through the grey morning light. The pilot was a woman he had flown with before. She nodded at him as he climbed in and strapped himself to the seat.

“Rough night,” she said.

“Yes.”

She did not say anything else. The rotors increased their speed and the helicopter lifted from the pad and turned toward the mainland. Below them, the fishing port fell away: the boats at anchor, the processing sheds, the offices where Ross had spent eight years managing schedules and rosters and maintenance reports and the thousand small decisions that kept a fleet operational.

He watched the water pass beneath them. It was grey and cold, moving with the particular heaviness of northern seas. Somewhere out there, the Harbour Dawn was still working. They had sent it back out. The catch season was short, the quotas were high, and one man's death did not change the economics of commercial fishing.

Ross thought about Steve. He thought about the morning briefings where Steve would sit in the back row and drink his coffee and ask questions that other men were afraid to ask. He thought about the safety meetings where Steve had raised concerns about the weather windows, about the equipment age, about the pressure to keep the boats moving.

He thought about how he had listened to those concerns and nodded and written them down and then done nothing.

The helicopter flew on. Ross did not blink. His face was rigid in a way that the pilot noticed but did not mention. She had been flying these routes for fifteen years and she had seen that look before. It was the look of a man carrying something too heavy to put down and too sharp to hold.

This is what the Camel knows. The Camel kneels and accepts the burden not because it wants to, but because it believes this is what strength requires. The Camel crosses the desert bearing the weight of duty, the weight of expectation, the weight of all the small compromises that accumulate like sand until they become a mountain that blocks out the sun.

Ross had been a Camel for eight years. He had accepted every burden that Northshore placed upon his back. He had borne the weight of schedules that were too tight and equipment that was too old and safety protocols that looked good on paper but meant nothing when the pressure came down from above. He had carried these things because that was his job, because that was what fleet operations managers did, because everyone else carried them too.

Now Steve Carter was dead, and Ross was flying to headquarters to explain how it had happened.

Chapter Three

Northshore Fisheries occupied a glass building on the waterfront in Aberdeen. It was new, clean, and bright, with the particular brightness of corporate offices that aim to project an image of modernity and progress. Ross had been there many times for quarterly reviews, strategic planning sessions, and the annual safety audits that everyone dreaded.

Frank Morrison's office was on the top floor. It had windows that looked out over the harbour, over the grey water and the grey sky and the boats coming and going. Frank was fifty-eight years old and had been CEO of Northshore for eleven years. He had never worked on a boat in his life.

When Ross entered, Frank stood and came around his desk. He wore a dark suit and his face was composed in the particular expression of professional sympathy that Ross had seen before at funerals and memorial services and the meetings that followed workplace fatalities.

"Ross." Frank shook his hand. "Please, sit down."

Ross sat. The chair was leather and soft and it felt wrong to be comfortable.

"I'm very sorry," Frank said. He returned to his side of the desk and settled into his chair. "I know the past forty-eight hours have been incredibly difficult."

Ross nodded.

"Steve was well respected here. His loss has been felt across the entire company."

Ross shifted in his chair. He looked at Frank's desk. A folder lay neatly in front of Frank, its edges perfectly aligned with the edge of the desk. Ross knew what was in that folder. He had written most of it himself.

"I want to walk through a few things today," Frank said. "Just to make sure we're aligned."

"Right." Ross's voice was flat.

"This work is dangerous. It always has been. Anyone who goes to sea understands that."

Frank opened the folder. Inside were the incident reports, the weather logs, the equipment maintenance records, the risk assessments, the sign off forms: all the paperwork that documented a man's death and transformed it into something that could be filed and forgotten.

"From what we've seen so far, all necessary procedures were followed."

Ross said nothing.

"I know that doesn't make it easier. It just means there are no unanswered questions about how this happened."

"I just..." Ross stopped himself.

Frank waited, giving him space. This was something Frank was good at: creating silences that other people felt compelled to fill.

"It all happened very quickly," Ross said.

"It usually does." Frank's voice was calm. "But Steve knew the risks. I know that doesn't make it easier to accept, but his family will be compensated in full. Northshore has already begun that process. We'll make sure it's handled properly and with respect."

"Thank you."

Frank closed the folder and slid it across the desk. A pen lay on top of it.

"This is the formal account of events as submitted to the board and the regulator. It reflects what we discussed on the call and what you confirmed at the time."

Ross looked at the folder but did not open it.

"It's important we're aligned on this," Frank said. "Consistency matters. For the company, for the investigation, for Steve's family."

Ross opened the folder. He turned a page, then another. The words swam before his eyes. He saw his own name at the bottom of documents he had written in the hours

after Steve's death, when he was still numb and compliant and operating on the automatic pilot that kicks in when the mind cannot process what has happened.

He picked up the pen. He signed.

Frank nodded and gathered the papers back into the folder. "Thank you, Ross. I know this isn't easy. Take the rest of the week. Be with your family."

Ross stood. Frank did not. Ross walked to the door and opened it and stepped through and closed it behind him. He did not look back at Frank, who had already opened another file on his desk and was reading something else.

In the corridor, Ross stood for a moment. The photograph in his pocket felt heavy against his chest. He thought about what he had just signed. He thought about what it said and what it did not say. He thought about the gap between paperwork and reality, between procedures followed and lives lost.

The Camel had signed. The Camel had accepted the burden once more. But something inside Ross Mitchell was beginning to shift.

Chapter Four

Sarah Carter lived in a small house on a street of small houses on the edge of town. Ross parked his car and sat for a moment, looking at the front door. A child's bicycle lay on its side in the front garden. The grass needed cutting. Steve had probably meant to cut it.

Ross got out of the car and walked to the door. He knocked. He waited. The door opened.

Sarah looked at him. She was younger than Steve had been, thirty-two or thirty-three, Ross thought. Her eyes were red and her face had the hollow look of someone who has not slept and cannot imagine sleeping again. She wore a sweater that was too big for her. Steve's, Ross thought.

"Ross."

"Sarah. May I come in?"

She stepped aside. Ross entered and stood in the small living room. Children's toys were scattered across the carpet. A mug of tea sat on the coffee table, untouched and cold. The television was on but muted: figures moving silently across the screen.

"Where's Thomas?" Ross asked.

"With my mother." Sarah sat on the sofa. She picked up the cold mug and held it in both hands. "He keeps asking when Daddy's coming home."

Ross stood opposite her. He reached into his jacket pocket and took out the photograph. "I found this. In Steve's locker."

He held it for a moment. Then he offered it to her.

Sarah reached out and took the photograph. She looked at it. Her thumb moved across Steve's face, then across their son's hands in his father's hair.

"He believed the sea was honest," she said. Her voice was quiet but steady. "That's what he always said. If you respected it, it would respect you back."

Ross did not say anything. There was nothing to say.

Sarah looked up at him. Something broke in her face. She folded forward, her body shaking with sobs that she could no longer hold back. Ross stood frozen for a moment, uncertain. Then he stepped forward and sat beside her on the sofa. He put his arms around her and held her while she wept.

The room was quiet except for her crying. Outside, the wind moved through the trees. Somewhere down the street, a dog barked once and then was silent.

Ross held Steve's widow and thought about honesty. He thought about what Steve had believed: that the sea was honest, that it would respect those who respected it. But the sea was not what killed Steve. The sea was just the sea. What killed Steve was something else. Something that lived in spreadsheets and schedule pressures and the slow erosion of standards that happens when everyone agrees not to see what is happening.

The sea was honest. Ross was not sure he could say the same about himself.

He stayed with Sarah for an hour. He made her fresh tea and listened while she talked about Steve: how they had met, how he had proposed, how he had cried when Thomas was born. He listened and nodded and said the things you say to someone whose world has collapsed.

When he left, the sun was setting over the small houses. Ross sat in his car and looked at the front door, now closed. He thought about the documents he had signed. He thought about the gap between what they said and what was true.

Something was changing in him. The Camel was growing tired of carrying its burden.

Chapter Five

Ross went home. His wife Margaret, was making dinner when he came through the door. She looked at him and knew something was wrong. After twenty years of marriage, she could read his silences.

"How was it?" she asked.

"It was what it was."

He sat at the kitchen table. The evening light came through the window and fell across the surface in long rectangles. Margaret put a cup of tea in front of him and sat down across the table.

"Frank had me sign the reports," Ross said.

"And?"

"I signed them."

Margaret waited. She knew there was more.

"The reports say everything was done properly. All procedures followed. All risk assessments completed. Nothing to suggest negligence."

"Is that true?"

Ross looked at his tea. Steam rose from the surface in thin spirals that twisted and disappeared.

"On paper, yes. Everything was documented. Everything was signed off. If you looked at the paperwork, you'd think we ran the safest operation in the North Sea."

"And in reality?"

Ross was quiet for a long time. When he spoke, his voice was low.

"In reality, we've been cutting corners for years. The weather windows are too tight. The equipment is older than it should be. The crews are tired because we push them to meet quotas that someone in an office decided were achievable. And when anyone raises concerns, when Steve raised concerns, we nod and write it down and then nothing changes."

Margaret reached across the table and put her hand on his.

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know."

But he did know. The knowledge sat in his chest like a stone. He knew what he should do. He knew what it would cost. He knew what Frank would say and what the company would do and how the investigation would unfold if he told the truth.

He thought about Sarah holding the photograph. He thought about Thomas asking when Daddy was coming home. He thought about Steve in the back row of safety meetings, asking questions that other men were afraid to ask.

The Camel was tired. The burden had become too heavy.

That night, Ross lay awake in the dark. Margaret slept beside him, her breathing slow and even. Outside, the wind moved through the trees and somewhere in the distance a ship's horn sounded, long and low.

He thought about Nietzsche's test: the eternal recurrence. If you had to live this moment again and again, infinitely, would you choose it? Would you want to repeat this choice forever?

He had signed the documents. He had agreed to the official version. If he said nothing more, the investigation would conclude that all procedures were followed and Steve Carter's death was a tragic accident and life would go on as before. The boats would keep sailing. The quotas would keep being met. And eventually, someone else would die.

Could he repeat that infinitely? Could he face that choice again and again, forever?

No.

The answer came with a certainty that surprised him. No, he could not live with that choice repeated eternally. The weight was too heavy. The silence was too loud.

Something had to break. Something had to change. The Camel could not carry this burden any longer.

Ross closed his eyes. Tomorrow, he would go back to Aberdeen. Tomorrow, he would tell Frank Morrison that he could no longer stay silent. Tomorrow, the Lion would speak.

PART II. THE BREAKING

*“To create new values, that even the lion cannot do;
but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation,
that is within the power of the lion.”*

NIETZSCHE

Chapter Six

A week passed. Ross returned to work. He sat in meetings and answered emails and signed reports and felt the stone in his chest grow heavier with each day. The investigation was proceeding along its expected course. The regulator had accepted the initial documentation. The board was satisfied that liability had been managed.

Steve Carter’s funeral was on a Tuesday. The sky was grey and the wind came off the water in cold gusts that pushed against the mourners gathered around the grave. Sarah stood at the front, holding Thomas’s hand. The boy wore a suit that was too big for him. He did not cry. He just looked at the wooden box being lowered into the ground and seemed to be trying to understand what it meant.

Ross stood at the back of the crowd. Frank Morrison stood near the front, his face composed in appropriate solemnity. Several Northshore executives were there, wearing dark suits and holding umbrellas against the drizzle that had begun to fall.

After the service, people gathered at Sarah’s house. Ross stood in the corner of the living room with a cup of tea he did not drink. He watched Frank cross the room to speak with Sarah, watched him take her hands and say something that made her nod and attempt a smile. He watched Frank’s face, sympathetic, concerned, sincere, and thought about the documents in Frank’s office, the documents that said Steve Carter’s death was nobody’s fault.

Frank caught Ross’s eye and nodded. Ross nodded back. Then Frank crossed the room to where Ross stood.

“Difficult day,” Frank said.

“Yes.”

“How are you holding up?”

“I’m fine.”

Frank studied him for a moment. “Good. It’s important to stay focused. The investigation is proceeding well. The regulator seems satisfied. We should have closure within a few weeks.”

Closure. Ross thought about that word. It was a word that meant different things to different people. For Frank, closure meant the investigation would end and the liability would be contained and the company would move on. For Sarah, closure might never come. For Thomas, closure was a concept he was too young to understand.

“I need to talk to you,” Ross said. “Tomorrow. In your office.”

Frank’s expression did not change. “Of course. Come by whenever you’re ready.”

They said nothing more. Ross left shortly after, driving home through the grey afternoon. Margaret asked how it was. He said it was what it was. They ate dinner in silence.

That night, Ross slept for the first time since Steve’s death. He slept deeply and dreamlessly, and when he woke, he knew what he had to do.

Chapter Seven

Ross entered Frank's office without knocking. Frank looked up from his desk, surprise flickering briefly across his face before professionalism smoothed it away.

"Ross."

Ross did not return the greeting. His jaw was tight. His body was rigid with a contained energy that he had been holding for days.

Frank gestured to the chair opposite him. "Please, sit."

"I'm fine standing."

Frank paused. Then he nodded and settled back into his chair. "All right."

"I've had some time to think," Ross said.

Frank waited. The silence stretched between them.

"Corners were cut."

Frank's expression remained neutral. Professional interest. Nothing more.

"Budgets mattered more than people," Ross continued. "Schedules mattered more than caution. Everyone knew it. Everyone accepted it. Me included."

"Ross..."

"I stayed quiet." Ross's voice was steady now. "I told myself it was normal. That this was just how the industry works. I signed off on things I wasn't comfortable with. I let it slide because that was easier than pushing back."

Frank watched him. His hands were folded on the desk.

"And now someone's dead."

The words hung in the air between them. Outside, gulls cried over the harbour.

"Steve's death is tragic," Frank said carefully. "No one is disputing that."

"It wasn't inevitable."

"No incident ever feels inevitable in hindsight."

"I can't do this anymore," Ross said. "I can't stay quiet. I'm going to tell the truth about what it was like out there."

Frank stood. Not abruptly, but with deliberate intention. He stepped out from behind his desk and stopped a few feet from Ross, close enough to speak without raising his voice.

"Ross, I want you to hear this clearly."

Ross met his eyes.

"I understand why you're angry. Grief has a way of sharpening everything. But what you're describing isn't wrongdoing. It's pressure. It's responsibility. It's the nature of the job you were hired to do."

"It still matters."

"I want you to slow down for a moment."

Ross held his ground.

"You have a family," Frank said. "A mortgage. Responsibilities. None of that disappears because you feel differently now."

Ross said nothing.

"And if what you're suggesting were taken further, if it were examined closely, investigators wouldn't start here." Frank gestured lightly around his office. "They'd start with the people closest to the decisions. The ones shaping how things are done day to day. The ones setting expectations."

He looked at Ross directly.

“I won’t stop you from saying what you believe is right. I simply want you to understand how these things normally unfold, and who they tend to land on.”

Frank stepped back and returned to his chair.

“So that’s it,” Ross said.

“That’s up to you.”

Ross turned and walked toward the door. He stopped with his hand on the handle.

“I understand what you’re saying, Frank. I understand the risks. But I also understand something else now. I can’t live with the silence. I won’t carry this anymore.”

He opened the door, walked through, and did not look back.

This is what the Lion does. The Lion says no to the great dragon who speaks of what has always been, of what must be accepted, of duty and convention and the way things are done. The Lion creates freedom through refusal. It does not yet know what new values will emerge, but it knows that the old constraints can no longer bind.

Ross Mitchell had been a Camel for twenty-two years. In Frank Morrison’s office, in that moment of refusal, he became a Lion.

Chapter Eight

The months that followed were difficult. Ross had known they would be. He had understood, when he walked out of Frank’s office, that he was choosing a path that would cost him.

He resigned from Northshore three days after his meeting with Frank. His resignation was accepted with professional courtesy and the kind of severance package that companies offer when they want someone to go quietly. Ross took the money. He had a family to support and a mortgage to pay and the future was uncertain.

He met with lawyers. He met with investigators from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. He gave statements and provided documents and answered questions for hours at a time in small rooms with recording equipment and people who took notes without looking at him.

The industry closed ranks against him. This was expected. Colleagues who had shared drinks with him at industry conferences stopped returning his calls. Executives who had praised his work now described him as unstable, as someone whose grief had overwhelmed his judgement. Frank Morrison issued a statement expressing concern for Ross’s wellbeing and suggesting that stress might have affected his recollection of events.

Margaret supported him. This was not expected, not because Ross doubted her, but because he knew the cost of his choice extended to her as well. Their savings were being depleted. Their future was uncertain. Their social circle had shrunk as people who had been friendly at company events now avoided them.

“Are you sure about this?” she asked him one evening. They were sitting in their kitchen, the dishes done, the house quiet around them.

“Yes.”

“Even knowing what it’s costing us?”

Ross looked at her. “If I stayed quiet and someone else died, another Steve, another wife without a husband, another child without a father, could I live with that?”

Margaret was quiet for a moment. Then she nodded.

"No," she said. "Neither could I."

Six months after Steve's death, the coroner's court convened. Ross received a summons to appear as a witness. He read the letter twice, folded it carefully, and put it in his jacket pocket.

The day had come. The Lion would speak.

Chapter Nine

The coroner's court was a small, functional room in a building that had been designed for bureaucracy rather than drama. Ross sat alone on a bench near the back, waiting to be called. His hands were steady but his heart was not.

Sarah sat in the front row. She had lost weight since the funeral. Her face was pale but composed. She did not look back at Ross. He was grateful for this. He was not sure what he would see in her eyes.

Frank Morrison sat across the room with Northshore's legal team. He wore a dark suit and his face showed nothing. He glanced at Ross once when he entered, a brief assessment, and then looked away.

The coroner was a man in his sixties with grey hair and glasses that he adjusted frequently. He spoke in the measured tones of someone who had presided over many such hearings and understood that his role was not to judge but to establish facts.

"This is not a criminal trial," he said to the room. "This is a public fact finding hearing into the circumstances surrounding Steve Carter's death. However, all evidence is given under oath, and anything said here may be relied upon in subsequent proceedings."

Ross was called to the witness stand. He stood and walked to the front of the room. He took the oath and sat in the witness chair. The coroner looked at him over his glasses.

"For the record, please state your name and your role at the time of the incident."

"Ross Mitchell. I was the Fleet Operations Manager for Northshore Fisheries at the time of the incident."

"Mr Mitchell, I'd like you to describe the events of that day as you understood them."

Ross began. He spoke clearly and professionally. He described the weather conditions, the vessel's departure, the risk assessments that had been completed and signed off. He described the procedures that had been followed, the documentation that had been filed, the standards that had been met.

On the Northshore side of the room, a subtle release of tension. This was the official version. This was what they expected.

"And in your view at the time," the coroner asked, "was the decision to proceed reasonable?"

"Yes."

The coroner made a note.

"Were there any concerns raised prior to sailing?"

"Concerns are raised on most trips. None were escalated to the point of standing the vessel down."

"Based on your evidence so far, the process appears compliant. Is that a fair summary?"

"It is."

The coroner paused. He studied Ross for a moment.

“Mr Mitchell, this court is concerned not only with what is written down, but with how decisions are made in practice. With that in mind, is there anything else you believe the court should understand?”

Ross opened his mouth to answer. Then he stopped. He swallowed.

This was the moment. Everything before had been preparation. Everything after would be consequence. Right now, in this small courtroom, Ross Mitchell faced the choice that would define the rest of his life.

He thought about Steve. He thought about Sarah in the front row. He thought about Thomas, who would grow up without a father. He thought about the eternal recurrence: if he had to live this moment again and again, forever, what would he choose?

“No,” he said.

The word hung in the air. Then he continued.

“Actually, yes. There is.”

Chapter Ten

The room stilled. Ross could feel everyone present’s attention focus on him, like a physical pressure.

“In the weeks leading up to the incident,” the coroner said carefully, “were there any broader operational pressures that may have influenced decision making?”

“There always are in commercial fishing.”

“Such as?”

“Catch targets. Time. Weather. Costs.”

“Were those pressures felt particularly strongly in this case?”

“Yes.”

“Did they influence how risk was assessed?”

Ross hesitated. He reached for the water glass beside him and drank. When he set the glass down, his hand was steady.

“They were considered.”

The coroner waited.

“The procedures were followed,” Ross said slowly. “On paper. But the way we were operating had changed.”

Across the room, the Northshore representatives straightened.

“Take your time,” the coroner said.

“The paperwork said one thing. The reality at sea was different.”

Ross looked at Sarah. She was watching him now, her eyes fixed on his face.

“There was constant pressure to keep vessels fishing. Delays were questioned. Pauses were discouraged. Each season, you told yourself you were just adapting, being pragmatic.”

He swallowed.

“No one ever said ‘ignore safety.’ It didn’t work like that. It was more subtle. You were rewarded for keeping boats moving, for not causing problems, for finding a way through.”

“Mr Mitchell,” the coroner said, “are you saying safety was compromised?”

Sarah looked up.

“I’m saying safety became something you worked around, rather than something that set the limits.”

“Can you explain?”

“There were warnings. Equipment issues. Weather concerns. Fatigue. None of them dramatic enough on their own to stop a trip. But taken together, they should have mattered.”

Ross took another drink of water.

“Steve’s death wasn’t a freak accident. It was the result of a system that accepted more and more risk, because that’s what it took to keep delivering.”

Sarah began to cry, silently, tears running down her face. One of the Northshore representatives shifted in his seat.

“Mr Mitchell,” the coroner said after a pause, “why are you choosing to say this now?”

Ross looked straight ahead.

“Because I stayed quiet for a long time. And because if this stays buried, it gets passed on. To the next crew. The next manager.”

He looked at Sarah.

“The next family.”

The coroner nodded slowly.

“Thank you, Mr Mitchell.”

Ross sat back in the witness chair. He felt emptied out, hollowed, as though something that had been pressing against his chest for months had finally been released. Across the room, Frank Morrison stood and walked out with the Northshore legal team. The door closed behind them with a sound that felt final.

The Lion had spoken. The old order had been challenged. But what would come next remained to be seen.

PART III. THE BEGINNING

*“The child is innocence and forgetting,
a new beginning, a game, a self rolling wheel,
a first movement, a sacred Yes saying.”*

NIETZSCHE

Chapter Eleven

Eighteen months passed.

The coroner’s findings were delivered eight weeks after the hearing. The ruling stopped short of assigning criminal blame, but the language was unambiguous: systemic failures in safety culture, inadequate attention to cumulative risk factors, pressure to meet commercial targets that compromised operational safety. The coroner issued a series of recommendations to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Northshore Fisheries faced regulatory sanctions and civil proceedings. Frank Morrison resigned six months after the ruling, citing personal reasons. The industry press suggested other factors. The company restructured its operations and hired new safety leadership and announced a commitment to cultural change. Whether the change would be genuine remained to be seen.

Ross Mitchell was never able to work in commercial fishing again. This was expected. The industry had long memories and the kind of testimony he had given was not forgiven. But something unexpected happened.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency contacted him three months after the inquest. They were implementing the coroner’s recommendations. They were developing new industry wide safety protocols. They needed people who understood how the industry actually worked, not how it looked on paper. Would he be interested in joining their inspection team?

Ross considered the offer for two days. He talked with Margaret. He walked along the harbour and watched the boats coming and going and thought about what it would mean to go back to the sea, but in a different capacity. Not as someone who managed risk on paper, but as someone who held the industry accountable to the standards it claimed to uphold.

He accepted.

Chapter Twelve

Before boarding the helicopter, Ross checked his messages in the operations room. One stood out among the routine correspondence. The Crown Prosecution Service was reviewing charges following the inquest. They wanted him to call when he returned.

He read the message twice. Then he switched off the phone and locked it in his locker with his personal effects, as protocol required. Whatever came next would come. He had done what he could do. The rest was out of his hands.

The helicopter lifted from the helipad and turned toward the open sea. Ross was strapped into his seat, wearing a high visibility jacket marked with the letters MCA. An

identification badge clipped to his chest read: Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Safety Inspector.

A work backpack rested beside him. Inside were his inspection forms, his recording equipment, and the procedures manual he had helped to write. The manual included new protocols for weather window assessment, equipment inspection standards, and crew fatigue monitoring: all developed in response to the coroner's recommendations.

The rotors picked up speed. Over the headset, the pilot's voice came through.

"Fishing vessel Horizon Star, this is Coastguard Flight Four Four Two. Safety inspector inbound. ETA forty minutes."

A small, steady smile crossed Ross's face.

He thought about what he was flying toward. A fishing vessel like the ones he had managed for eight years. A crew like the crews he had known. Men and women who went to sea because that was their work and their life and their inheritance from generations who had done the same.

They deserved better than paperwork that protected companies instead of people. They deserved safety standards that meant something, not standards that could be worked around when the pressure came. They deserved what Steve Carter had deserved: the honest sea that he had believed in, where respect was mutual and the rules existed to protect the people who did the work.

Ross looked out the window at the grey water passing beneath them. Somewhere out there, the next generation of fishermen were learning their trade. Some of them would become fleet managers. Some of them would face the same pressures Ross had faced: the quotas, the schedules, the subtle pressure to accept more risk than was wise.

But now there was something different. Now there were new protocols, new standards, new accountability. And these were not just words on paper. They were the legacy of a man who had died and another man who had chosen to tell the truth about how he died.

This is what the Child creates. Not through obligation, not through rebellion, but through affirmation. The Child says yes to life, yes to possibility, yes to building something new from the ashes of what was broken. The Child creates not because it must, not because it should, but because creation is the nature of the spirit that has passed through burden and breaking and emerged on the other side.

Ross Mitchell had been a Camel, bearing the weight of an industry's compromises. He had become a Lion, roaring against the chains of silence and complicity. Now he was something new: a creator, a builder, a man who had found purpose not in what he could gain but in what he could give.

The helicopter flew on toward the Horizon Star. Below, the sea moved with its eternal rhythms, unchanged by the small dramas of the men who sailed upon it. But the men themselves had changed. Or at least, the systems that governed their safety had changed. And that change, that trace, would outlast any individual life.

EPILOGUE. STEVE'S RULE

Three years after Steve Carter's death, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency formally adopted a new set of safety protocols for commercial fishing operations. The protocols addressed weather-window assessment, cumulative risk factors, crew fatigue, and the accountability structures governing operational decisions.

Among those who worked in the industry, the new rules became known informally as "Steve's Rule."

This was not because Steve Carter had written the rules. He had not. He had been a deckhand who asked questions that others were afraid to ask and raised concerns that others chose to ignore. He had believed that the sea was honest and that if you respected it, it would respect you back.

The rules bore his name because his death had forced the industry to confront what it had preferred not to see. Because Ross Mitchell had chosen to tell the truth when silence would have been easier. Because the coroner had issued recommendations that could not be ignored. Because sometimes change requires a catalyst, and the catalyst is often loss.

Steve's Rule was a trace, not noise.

Noise is what attracts attention without creating change. Noise is press releases and public relations and the appearance of concern without the substance of action. Noise fades. Noise is forgotten. Noise leaves nothing behind.

Traces are different. Traces are changes that persist beyond their creators. Traces become part of how things are done, woven into the fabric of institutions and practices and expectations. Traces shape the decisions of people who never knew their origin, who take them for granted as simply the way things work.

Steve Carter did not know he was creating a trace. He was just a man who went to sea and did his work and asked questions when something seemed wrong. He did not know that his death would become a turning point, that his name would be attached to rules that would protect thousands of lives for generations to come.

Ross Mitchell did not know, when he walked into Frank Morrison's office and said he could no longer stay silent, that he was creating a trace either. He was just a man who could no longer carry the weight of complicity, who had reached the point where the burden had to be put down or it would crush him. He acted because he had to act, because the alternative was intolerable.

But that is how traces are created. Not through grand planning or strategic calculation, but through moments when someone chooses to do what is right rather than what is easy. Through accumulated decisions that compound over time. Through the courage to speak when silence would be safer, to create when destruction would be simpler, to build when walking away would be more comfortable.

Sarah Carter remarried four years after Steve's death. Her new husband was a teacher at Thomas's school, a quiet man who had lost his first wife to cancer and understood something about grief and continuation. They moved to a house with a larger garden where Thomas could play.

Thomas grew up knowing his father only through photographs and stories. His mother told him about the man who had believed the sea was honest, who had smiled when he worked, who had loved his family with the simple devotion of someone who did not know how to be any other way.

When Thomas was sixteen, he did a school project on maritime safety. He learned about Steve's Rule. He learned that his father's death had led to changes that protected thousands of workers across the industry. He learned that Ross Mitchell, a man he had never met, had told the truth when lying would have been easier.

Thomas wrote to Ross. The letter was short and simple, the words of a teenager who had not yet learned to complicate things with qualification and nuance. "Thank you," he wrote. "Thank you for telling the truth about my dad. Thank you for making sure he mattered."

Ross kept the letter in his desk drawer. He read it sometimes when the work was hard, when the inspections were frustrating, when the industry pushed back against the standards he was trying to enforce. The letter reminded him why he did what he did. It reminded him that traces matter, even when they are invisible to those who create them.

Nietzsche wrote of the eternal recurrence: the idea that if you had to live your life again and again, infinitely, repeating every choice and every consequence forever, you should strive to live in such a way that you would welcome that repetition.

Ross Mitchell had faced that test in a coroner's courtroom. He had asked himself: if I have to repeat this moment infinitely, what will I choose? And he had chosen to speak.

That choice created a trace that extended beyond his life, beyond Steve's life, into a future where crews would work more safely and families would be less likely to receive the call that Sarah had received. The trace was not dramatic. It was not a monument or a memorial. It was something quieter and more lasting: a change in how things were done, embedded in the structures and practices of an industry.

This is what legacy means. Not fame or recognition, but influence that outlasts the self. The patient accumulation of right action over time. The compound interest of ethical behaviour that builds something greater than any individual contribution.

Steve Carter left a trace. Ross Mitchell left a trace. Neither of them set out to build a legacy. They simply did what they believed was right, faced the consequences of their choices, and allowed the effects to unfold.

The sea continues to move with its eternal rhythms. Men and women continue to go out on boats and do the dangerous work of bringing food from the water. But they are a little safer now than they were before. And when they return home to their families, there is a slightly better chance that they will return again tomorrow.

That is Steve's Rule. That is the trace that outlasts the noise. That is what it means to build something that endures.

AFTERWORD. CONNECTING THE STORY TO YOUR JOURNEY

The story of Ross Mitchell is fiction, but the patterns it describes are real. In every industry, in every organisation, there are moments when individuals face the choice between comfortable silence and difficult truth. There are burdens that accumulate until they cannot be carried any longer. There are chains that must be broken before new creation becomes possible.

The three metamorphoses, Camel, Lion, Child, are not stages we pass through once and leave behind. They are modes of being that we cycle through repeatedly, at deeper levels of understanding, as we grow and face new challenges. The Camel teaches us resilience and the value of accepting worthy burdens. The Lion teaches us courage and the necessity of challenging what no longer serves. The Child teaches us creativity and the joy of building something new.

As you consider your own professional journey, you might ask yourself:

What burdens am I carrying that build strength, and which have become merely heavy? The Camel's path is noble when the burden serves a purpose. But burdens that merely crush without developing capability are not worth bearing.

What constraints have I accepted as given that might be unnecessary limitations? The Lion asks this question not from rebellion but from genuine inquiry. Some rules serve essential purposes. Others are merely the residue of decisions made long ago under different circumstances.

What might I create if I approached my work with fresh eyes and genuine joy? The Child does not create from obligation or opposition but from affirmation. The Child says yes to possibility and builds what has never existed before.

And finally, and most importantly: Am I leaving traces or making noise? Are my activities creating lasting positive change, or merely attracting temporary attention? If my actions were repeated infinitely, would they build a world worth inhabiting?

Ross Mitchell did not set out to create a legacy. He simply faced a moment of choice and chose according to his values. The legacy emerged from that choice and the choices that followed.

Your moments of choice may be different. They may be smaller, or they may be larger. But they will come. And when they do, the question will be the same: What trace will you leave?

This story is dedicated to all who go to sea, and to those who wait for them to return.



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PUBLISHED BY
ACTES SUD GRAPHIC WORKSHOP
REPRODUCED AND PRINTED
IN MARCH 2026 BY SEPEC PRINTING

Print no.:
(Printed in France)

Eternity is not a distant goal, but a current choice. Every decision we make today strengthens or weakens the foundations on which others will build tomorrow.

Building for eternity establishes an implicit alliance with future generations. They will judge our chapter not by our intentions, but by the outcome of our choices.

Will they discover an organisation that has wisely navigated upheavals, rising to the challenge of permanence and flexibility by adapting yet retaining its identity? Will they find a culture where every voice matters and where the well-being of all stakeholders is taken into consideration? Will they inherit the capabilities needed to meet their own challenges with assurance?

Building a lasting legacy is the central challenge that every organisation must meet in order to stand the test of time. Meeting that challenge requires three essential drivers: managing the paradox of stability and change, developing leadership capabilities, and designing a model for institutional transformation. This is the true nature of legacy: it extends beyond the imagination of its founder thanks to the contributions of others. It evolves beyond the initial vision thanks to collective wisdom. It endures beyond individual lives through the vitality of the institution itself. It transcends material measures because it enables human fulfilment.

Altrad's story continues through each of us. Every day, through countless decisions, large and small, we create the legacy we will leave behind.

With courage, humility, respect, solidarity, and conviviality, let us continue to build the sustainable world that is our *raison d'être*.

The possibilities are endless. Such is our shared eternity.

MOHED ALTRAD

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