

# Mixing it up



An ongoing development programme that draws on the Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile and the Leadership Behaviours Profile is helping New Zealand company Champion Flour Mills raise its strategic game after a change of ownership.

In May 2014 Champion Flour Mills NZ Ltd asked New Zealand-based leadership consultancy Team Leadership Services (TLS) to facilitate some strategic planning, leadership and team development initiatives for 32 senior managers at its head office and two manufacturing sites. Champion produces approximately 60% of New Zealand's flour and cereal-based products, including flours, meals, bread and cake mixes,

margarines, shortening and a variety of other baking ingredients.

The catalyst for the work was the acquisition of the business in late 2013 by Nisshin Flour Milling Inc, the Japanese-based international food giant. This inevitably disrupted systems, people and significant business-to-business relationships. What's more, Champion's previous owner,

Goodman Fielder, was now its biggest customer, and another major player entered the market shortly afterwards. So very quickly a duopoly became a quadropoly, and Champion needed to raise its strategic game in what was a much more competitive marketplace. An initial 'cry for help' led to the formation of a genuine partnership between TLS and Champion, which continues today.



TLS began its work with the 12-strong executive team, who wanted to improve their performance, leadership and teamwork to an international best-practice level. This goal was consistent with the organisation's philosophy of continuous improvement, influenced both by the Japanese commitment to kaizen and the need for product innovation, and it complemented other development initiatives that the top team engaged in throughout the same period.

A key aim of TLS's overarching development initiative was to maintain a clear and overt connection to the organisation's strategic direction. It worked with Champion to develop a vision, mission and strategic imperatives, and the initiatives and projects that fell out of these strategic imperatives. TLS adopted universally accepted tools to help the executives achieve results from this process and, crucially, apply them in their day-to-day work environment. The Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile played a pivotal role, as did the Leadership Behaviours Profile (LBP) developed by Dr Paul Robinson and the team at TLS.

For example, TLS has linked the Team Management Wheel to the process Champion uses to plan and deliver new initiatives (the Task Achievement Cycle) to give executives a simple process for thoroughly evaluating and delivering any initiative or project. They usually develop more detailed project plans afterwards, but the simplicity of this model and the confidence it builds in managers helps to move projects and plans forward in an agreed fashion, creating a momentum that might not otherwise exist. By using the Team Management Profile, individuals can bring their own personal strengths to bear on any initiative (based on their identified preferences), while the team as a whole is reassured that it is covering all the critical parts of the process - even if the team preferences are not perfectly balanced around the Wheel.

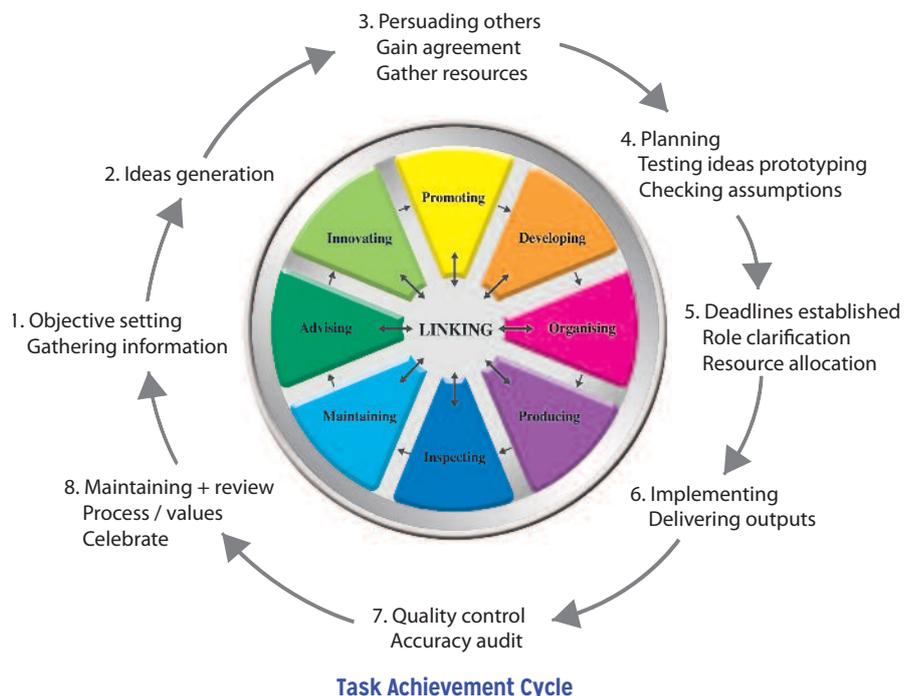
The universal language of the Team Management Profile has benefits at organisation, team and individual development level. TLS even pitched the strategy development process that it facilitated for the executive team as a version of the Task Achievement Cycle. For example, the reporting and advising area of the Wheel stimulates the environment scanning required in order to create the three-year future picture/vision (the innovation segment of the Wheel). The promoting segment ensures that the strategy is communicated to the wider team before being implemented and, ultimately, regularly reviewed.

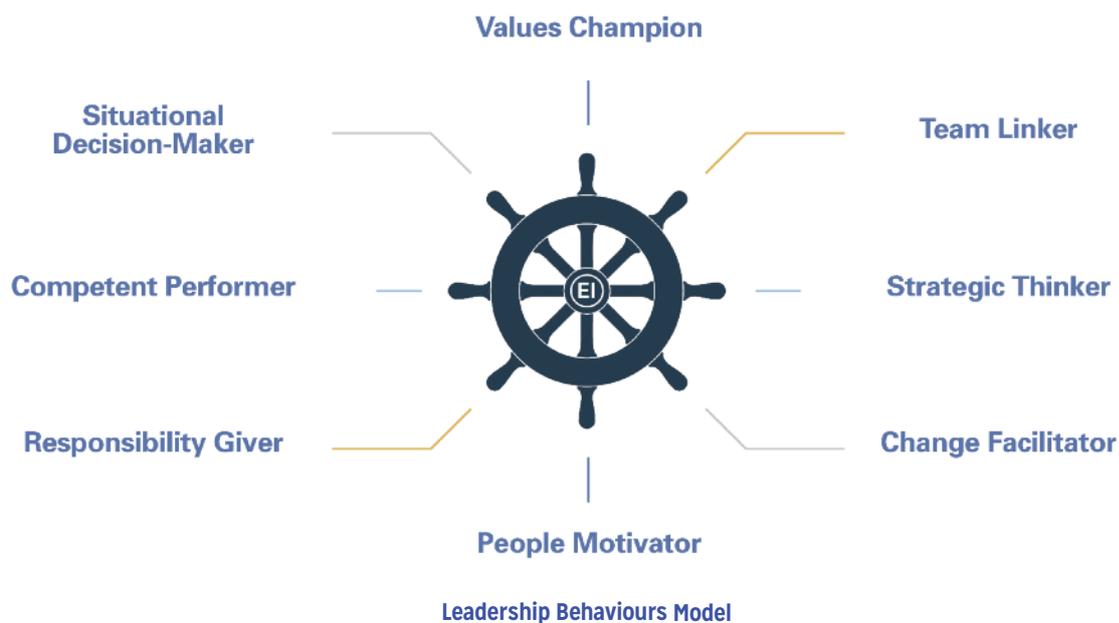
TLS has found that everyone buys into the Task Achievement process at Champion once they understand the Team Management Profile and their own preferences, which reinforces the

legitimacy and meaning of the Task Achievement process for them.

“ the Team Management Profile and LBP work supports commercial necessity

The Champion executives have bought in to this to such an extent that they now use the Team Management Wheel to hold different types of meetings. For example, Green/Yellow meetings are about innovating and entrepreneurial endeavour, Red/Blue meetings are about planning and implementation, and White Linking meetings are for quick catch-ups.





The Team Management Profile highlights an individual's preferences and strengths, which can help them understand themselves and others and, as a result, create more effective team working. However you are more likely to get a significant shift in leadership performance or management style where an individual receives quality feedback (in a safe way) from a group of key people - colleagues, managers and subordinates. For this reason, TLS brought into the equation the Leadership Behaviours Profile (LBP), a 360-degree feedback tool.

The LBP works particularly well when used in conjunction with the Team Management Profile. It measures actual behaviour, from the perspective of significant others, over a six-month period. Opinions are canvassed from a selection of six to eight raters - typically the individual's manager, peers and others with whom they interact, such as their direct reports - on that individual's performance across eight key dimensions of leadership behaviour as shown in the Leadership Behaviours Model. The LBP also gives the individual key insights into their emotional and social intelligence.

The behaviours in the model are represented on a Captain's Wheel, which symbolises a skipper - a leader with people responsibility, competence and integrity, who provides direction and guidance in an emotionally intelligent way.

Every three months Champion has refreshed its three-year strategy and reviewed the configuration of its teams (activities that fall into the maintaining segment of the Team Management Wheel). On each occasion, TLS and Champion revisit the Team Management Profile in order to keep the language of teamwork alive when teams are formed, reformed or reconfigured. In addition, the six-monthly LBP Pulse Reports (comparing current feedback with that in the original LBP report) give individuals

regular development 'wake-up calls' that keep them focused on becoming better leaders. Throughout the process there are inevitable setbacks, but the iterative nature of the process ensures that most people sustain the insight into themselves and their behaviour that they gained through the initial Team Management Profile and LBP, and maintain their leadership effort.

The original group of 32 senior managers has been relatively stable between 2014 and 2016, but business imperatives have required some restructuring and a few changes in personnel. Because TLS has been careful throughout to match individuals' development with their individual performance drivers (typically these are directly or indirectly designed to improve Champion's business performance), Champion sees the Team Management Profile and LBP work as supporting commercial necessity rather than being an end in itself.

Ongoing workshops and a coaching programme provide the glue for the entire organisation development intervention at Champion.

The first phase of the intervention, which TLS introduced in 2014, was a strategy and leadership programme - first the 12-strong executive team and then a group of ten at each of the manufacturing sites. Each of the three teams attended a strategy workshop, the purpose of which was to develop and cascade the strategy.

They then progressed to the leadership programme, which was designed to ensure the strategy was successful through, for example, increasing self awareness, enhancing relationships, improving team performance and maximising leadership effectiveness. The strategy and leadership programmes then informed the content of the subsequent individual coaching programme. Each of the 32

senior managers has received an average of three hours' coaching every month over the past two years, with coaches matched to managers according to their respective strengths and experience.

Alongside this coaching regime, TLS has also run strategy and leadership refresher programmes and further team development workshops, and provided feedback to steering committee meetings on things like meeting skills and process effectiveness.

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The senior management at Champion acknowledge the significance of TLS's continuing work to support organisation, team and leadership development. Human Resources manager Russell Holland sums it up as follows.

“Our strategy is now robust and the organisation is aligned [in terms of people, strategy, goals and values]. The mood is positive despite difficult trading conditions. The tools used by TLS have really helped. The Team Management Profile has given everyone a better understanding of themselves, and the Leadership Behaviours Profile gives them feedback on how other people see their leadership performance. The tools are well researched and well received because they have a language that people in business can understand and use to help them move forward. We have seen people grow and we now have a much better alignment between the organisation's strategy and people's roles. Great tools, and a great process, which really make a difference.”



# Leadership Behaviours Profile

The Leadership Behaviours Profile (LBP) is a powerful and practical multi-rater feedback tool. It offers a 360-degree review of an individual's leadership performance as measured by the Leadership Behaviours Model.

The Model combines a number of concepts of contemporary leadership theory – including principle-centred, transformational and transactional leadership – with a focus on the practical application of these concepts.

Developed by Dr Paul Robinson with colleagues at Team Leadership Services in New Zealand, this well-researched Profile provides constructive feedback to help improve and develop performance as a leader.

The Profile also includes a Pulse Report six months after completion of the initial feedback. This offers a snapshot of progress along an individual's leadership journey, providing an excellent opportunity for further discussion and development.

## The LBP provides individuals with:

- feedback and advice on how important different aspects of leadership are in their current role
- feedback and advice on their perceived behaviour in relation to the eight factors of the Leadership Behaviours Model
- a comparison of their perceived behaviour against LBP norm data
- tailored advice sheets with suggestions on how they could improve their leadership performance
- an assessment of their level of Emotional Intelligence, including a comparison against LBP norm data
- observations on their perceived leadership and management achievements over the last six months; their key strengths; their training and development needs; and suggestions on how they might improve their performance in these areas

