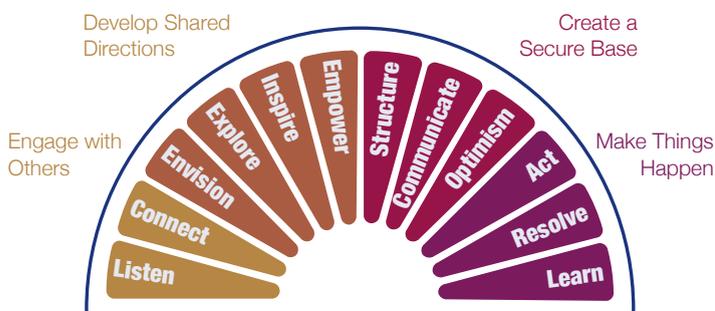


Leadership Strengths of Senior Leaders in Australian Churches

NCLS Research has identified 12 Leadership Strengths that contribute to effective and sustainable leadership. These strengths interact and build upon each other, and will help in building healthy communities, negotiating challenging situations and growing new directions.

They revolve around a capacity to engage with others, to connect sensitively with people and work with them to find an owned vision, and seek to develop shared directions. They involve a willingness to create a secure base in the here and now, a stable platform on which to build which enables people to make things happen.



12 Leadership Strengths

Engage with others:

1. Listen: Listen deeply
2. Connect: Build mutual connections

Develop shared directions:

3. Envision: Envision together
4. Explore: Explore options creatively
5. Inspire: Inspire heart commitment
6. Empower: Empower people to contribute

Create a secure base:

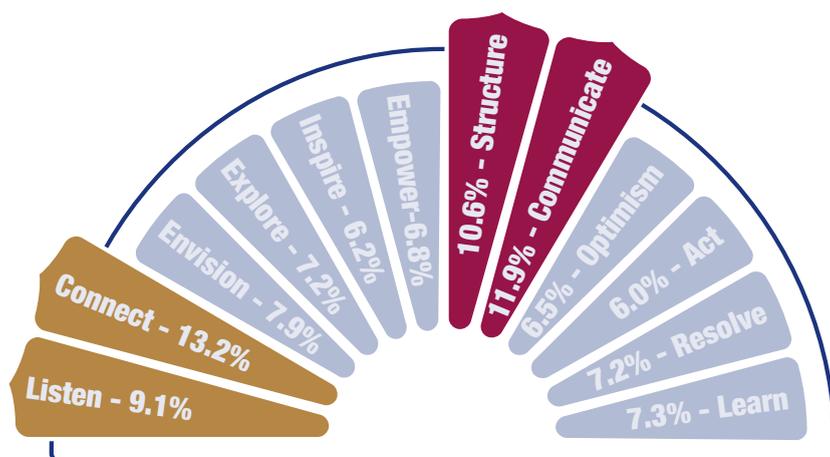
7. Structure: Create clear positive structures
8. Communicate: Develop reliable communication
9. Optimism: Build a culture of optimism

Develop shared directions:

10. Act: Move to action
11. Resolve: Maintain resolve
12. Learn: Learn and grow from experience

Top Leadership Strengths

The proportion of senior leaders in Australia who identified their top leadership strength



The top four leadership strengths of senior church leaders in Australia:

1. **Connect:** build mutual connections – 13.2%
2. **Communicate:** develop reliable communication – 11.9%
3. **Structure:** create clear positive structures – 10.6%
4. **Listen:** listen deeply – 9.1%

Source: NCLS 2006 Leaders Survey, based on 3,748 senior leaders in Australia

A strengths based approach

Seeing leadership as a range of strengths can be new for some. A strengths-based approach can engage people in quite a different way. It can take them from only focusing on who they are not, to looking at who they are, and what they can build on, in order to grow. NCLS research suggests that where leadership builds on strengths, churches tend to have higher levels of vitality and growth, and are drawing in more newcomers without a church background.

A team based approach

NCLS Research has found leadership that works best is leadership that builds teams of people, bringing together different strengths together, fostering a culture of empowerment where one's strengths enhances another's and the whole group benefits.

Churches where leadership builds on strengths are more likely to have higher levels of vitality as can be seen below



Source: 2006 NCLS. Based on all attender assesment of overall leadership of church. See appendix 1 in Lead With Your Strengths for further details

Complete list of Leadership Strengths of Senior Leaders in Australia

Engage with others

A starting point is effective engagement with others. Leaders need to understand well the situations in which they find themselves, growing solid foundations of trust and shared purpose on which initiatives or directions can be built. These engaging strengths include:

- 1. LISTEN:** Listen deeply, stepping beyond our own agendas and being fully present for others, seeing things from their point of view and understanding what is going on for them. **9.1%**
- 2. CONNECT:** Build mutual connections, coming alongside others, growing networks around common interests or hopes, and building a solid platform of trust from which new possibilities can emerge. **13.2%**

Develop shared directions

Exercising leadership involves developing direction and priorities and helping people grow commitment to a common purpose. This will involve several elements:

- 3. ENVISION:** Envision together, focusing on purpose and future direction, not just on immediate issues or matters of maintenance. **7.9%**
- 4. EXPLORE:** Explore options creatively, helping people understand the importance of moving in new directions, by encouraging fresh ideas, curiosity and lateral thinking in order to discover the best ways forward. **7.2%**
- 5. INSPIRE:** Inspire heart commitment by growing ownership of group purpose and excitement about the journey. **6.2%**
- 6. EMPOWER:** Empower people to contribute, helping people find their place within the overall plan. **6.8%**

Create a secure base

New directions often involve risk or instability. People will be better able to journey into uncertain territory if they have a sense of safety and stability in the present. Some key elements include:

- 7. STRUCTURE:** Create clear, positive structures where people know how things operate and what is expected. **10.6%**
- 8. COMMUNICATE:** Develop reliable communication that helps create a nurturing environment of trust in which people feel safe. **11.9%**
- 9. OPTIMISM:** Build a culture of optimism, encouraging people to build on what they have, focusing on potential and hopes. **6.5%**

Make things happen

The previous strengths provide the solid basis needed for a group to step out with purpose, and turn ideas into action. When a group begins to make things happen, important leadership strengths include:

- 10. ACT:** Move to action, knowing the moment to step out and give something a go, even though it may feel risky. **6.0%**
- 11. RESOLVE:** Maintain resolve: the determination to stay on course when things get difficult, or in the face of competing demands. **7.2%**
- 12. LEARN:** Learn and grow from experience, being open to learn and be changed, possibly in quite significant ways. **7.3%**

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References

This fact sheet was based on *Lead With Your Strengths*. For more information, go to www.leadwithyourstrengths.net.