

PURPOSE DRIVING PERFORMANCE

Many organisations can describe their purpose.
Far fewer harness their purpose to achieve success.

An Executive Brief from Neil Gaught & Associates

NG&A

The Purpose Imperative

Why purpose has become a strategic necessity for today's leaders



ISO37011

ISO 37011 – Guidance for the Governance of Organizations by Purpose will be the first international standard providing guidance on governing organisations by purpose. It reflects a significant shift in global thinking, recognising purpose as a strategic governance discipline rather than a communications or branding exercise.

When purpose sits at the heart of organisational governance, it creates coherence, informs better decisions and generates enduring value, even when circumstances are changing and difficult trade-offs must be made.

It provides a clear reference point for leadership, aligning people, priorities and resources in ways that strengthen productivity, improve organisational performance and enable organisations to navigate increasing complexity with confidence.

Today, leaders of organisations of all sizes and sectors face an extraordinarily challenging operating environment. Climate change, geopolitical instability, rapid technological disruption, shifting societal expectations and declining trust in institutions are combining to create unprecedented complexity.

At the same time, employees, customers, investors, regulators and communities increasingly expect organisations to demonstrate not only what they do, but why they do it and how they create value.

In this environment, it is no surprise that purpose has evolved from a peripheral branding exercise into a practical strategic discipline. It enables organisations to balance the interests of shareholders and owners with those of customers, employees, suppliers, communities and the environment, creating the clarity and alignment needed to respond consistently as circumstances change.

For today's leaders, the question is no longer whether purpose matters. It clearly does.

The real question is why so many organisations struggle to move beyond business as usual and align their organisation around a core purpose that improves decision-making, enhances productivity, strengthens performance and delivers more meaningful, measurable outcomes.

The answer lies in a framework that transforms purpose into better decisions, stronger performance and enduring value.

The Business Case for Purpose

The evidence is compelling. Organisations with an authentic, embedded purpose consistently outperform their peers. Yet most organisations still struggle to translate purpose into meaningful organisational impact.

FINANCIAL

13.6%

Purpose-driven companies achieved a **13.6% compound annual growth rate** over 20 years. That's around **three times** that of comparable businesses.

Financial Times

PEOPLE

5.6x

Employees with a strong sense of purpose at work are **5.6 times more likely to be engaged** and significantly less likely to be actively seeking another job.

Gallup, *The Power of Purpose* (2025)

PERFORMANCE

23%

Organisations with highly engaged employees achieve **23% higher profitability**.

They also achieve **18% higher productivity**, alongside **78% lower absenteeism**.

Gallup Q12 Meta-Analysis (11th Edition, 2024)

PROFITABILITY

6.3%

88% of consumers say trusting a brand is as important as quality. Authentic, purpose-driven organisations build that trust, strengthening customer loyalty and long-term commercial performance.

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer

EXECUTION

42%

Only 42% of organisations believe their corporate purpose has translated into meaningful organisational impact.

Harvard Business Review

The SOI® Strategic Framework

Transforming purpose into a practical strategic discipline

Endorsements from internationally recognised leaders in business and management:

"SOI® Has so much much more potential to make a difference than a simple purpose."

Charles Handy, one of the world's most influential management thinkers

"A simple, direct, approach to identifying, creating, implementing and measuring the impact of a core purpose for almost any organisation" **Rob Markey, Co-creator of the Net Promoter SystemSM**

"I strongly recommend it for those trying to succeed at the interface between business and society."

John Elkington, originator of the Triple Bottom Line.

Most organisations treat commercial and societal objectives as separate priorities to be balanced. SOI® rejects that assumption. It organises both around a Single Organising Idea, replacing competing agendas with one shared purpose for creating enduring value.

Conceived in New Zealand and continually refined over more than two decades through practical application and the collective insights of business leaders, academics, clients and purpose practitioners around the world, SOI® is a strategic framework specifically designed to identify, define, embed and activate organisational purpose.

Its development has anticipated a broader shift in global thinking: that purpose is not a communications exercise but a governance discipline capable of improving organisational performance while creating enduring value.

Rather than treating purpose as a statement or initiative, SOI® aligns governance, strategy, culture, operations and performance around a single organising idea. The result is greater clarity, stronger decision-making and an organisation

that consistently creates value for shareholders, customers, employees, suppliers, communities and the environment.

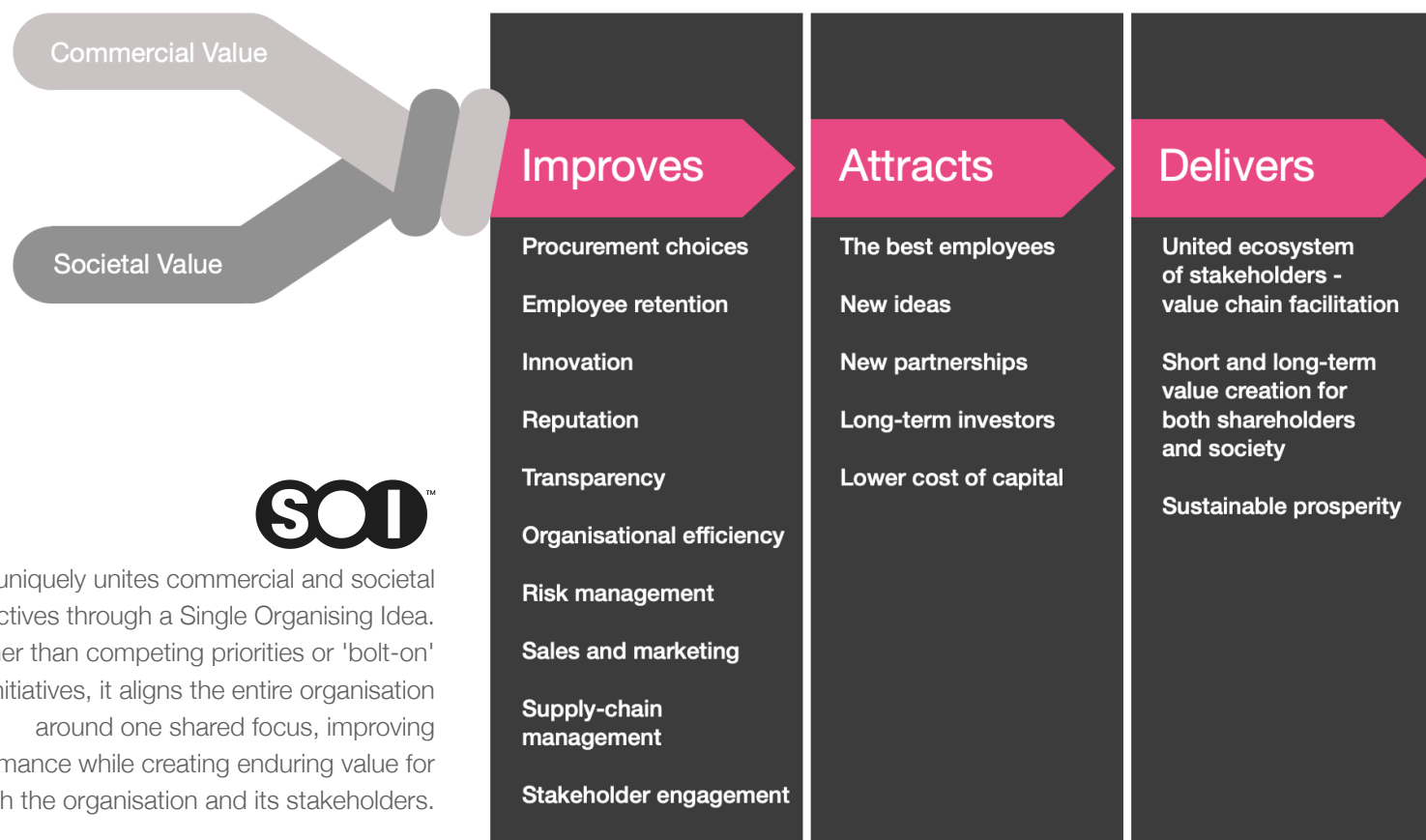
The framework has been applied by organisations of every size across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. It has informed strategy and organisational development across Europe, North America, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Africa, demonstrating its adaptability across different cultures, industries and governance models.

In New Zealand, organisations ranging from government agencies and educational institutions to tourism organisations, professional services firms, property companies and high-growth businesses have successfully applied the framework to address their own strategic opportunities and challenges.

Today, SOI® provides leaders with a practical, proven framework for replacing competing organisational agendas with one shared purpose, and transforming purpose from aspiration into a disciplined way of governing, leading and creating enduring value.

The Power of One

SOI® uniquely unites commercial and societal objectives around a single organising idea, replacing competing priorities with one shared focus for creating enduring value.



SOI® uniquely unites commercial and societal objectives through a Single Organising Idea. Rather than competing priorities or 'bolt-on' initiatives, it aligns the entire organisation around one shared focus, improving performance while creating enduring value for both the organisation and its stakeholders.

Putting Purpose into Practice

Twenty years of helping organisations turn purpose into performance



20+ years of trusted advice

For more than twenty years, NG&A has helped organisations define purpose, align strategy and improve performance across a wide range of industries and sectors..

5 continents

NG&A has worked with for profit and not for profit organisations across Europe, North America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia-Pacific, bringing global experience together with local insight.

6 Senior NZ Associates

Our multidisciplinary New Zealand team combines expertise in governance, leadership, strategy, culture, communications and organisational transformation to deliver practical, purpose-led change.

In truth, purpose is rarely the challenge. Most leaders already recognise its importance to some degree. The challenge is turning an ideal into a pragmatic governance framework that delivers better decisions, supports dynamic cultures and stronger performance outcomes.

That is where Neil Gaught & Associates (NG&A) makes the difference.

We combine internationally recognised thought leadership with practical experience, helping leaders navigate complexity, align diverse stakeholders and build organisations that are commercially stronger, socially valuable and better equipped for the future.

Our role is not to impose solutions but to help organisations discover their own distinctive purpose and then align every part of the organisation around it.

Our methodology has evolved through two decades of practical application, informed as much by clients as by research. Every engagement has refined our thinking, whether working with international institutions, listed

companies, public sector organisations, charities or start-up enterprises.

That continuous learning is reflected in our contribution to global thinking on organisational purpose, including our Founder's award winning book *CORE*, and participation in the development of ISO 37011.

We are deliberately selective about the work we undertake. We partner with leaders who recognise that purpose is not a cosmetic exercise but a strategic opportunity to create enduring value for shareholders, customers, employees, suppliers, communities and the environment.

So, while every organisation is different, our objective remains the same: to make complexity simple, build capability that lasts long after an engagement ends, and help organisations of all types and sizes realise the full potential of being purpose driven.



Discover the SOI® Framework

Visit our website

Explore our services, case studies, articles, client stories and practical resources to learn how purpose can transform organisational performance.

<https://neilgaught.com/>



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Weekly essays, interviews and book reviews exploring leadership, governance, organisational purpose and the future of business.

<https://neilgaught.substack.com/>



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Jayne Atherton

Chief Executive Officer
Neil Gaught & Associates

Email: jayne@neilgaught.com

Mobile: 027 801 1792

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jayne-atherton-a5b3b916/>

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{ Empowering Purpose Driven Progress }