

Transforming a heritage business through Leadership, Culture and Capability at Ingham's.

Discover how Ingham's, Australia and New Zealand's top poultry producer, achieved record growth by transforming leadership, culture, and strategy.

A powerful case study in modern business transformation.



Background

Building a high-performing listed company by focusing on leadership, customer partnerships, culture transformation, and operational excellence.

Ingham's, Australia and New Zealand's largest poultry producer, has a long and proud history, founded over 100 years ago by the Ingham family. For much of its life as a family-owned company, Ingham's developed strong operational practices, but also a leadership culture dominated by "red" (task-driven) and "green" (passive) behaviours.

Following its sale to private equity in 2010 and subsequent ASX listing in 2016, Ingham's faced a new set of challenges: adapting to public company expectations, addressing cultural legacy issues, and aligning leadership to deliver on strategic ambitions.

Ingham's executive leadership, supported by Human Synergistics, recognised that long-term success would require a deep focus on leadership capability, culture change, and strategic clarity — across a workforce of 8,000 employees and an extended network of contractors and suppliers.

Today, Ingham's has posted its best-ever financial results, demonstrating that investment in people and culture pays off in business performance.

Ingham's needed to do things differently.

1. Build strategic alignment between board and executive.
2. Rebuild and empower leadership at all levels.
3. Transform the organisation's culture to enable enterprise thinking.

Challenge

Ingham's legacy of hierarchical decision-making and siloed operations was a barrier to success as a modern listed company.

The business lacked strategic alignment between the board and executive team, had immature planning processes, and faced entrenched cultural behaviours that reinforced poor collaboration and defensive leadership styles.

Ingham's needed a major reset — not just operationally, but culturally — to align the organisation to the new demands of being a customer-centric, data-driven, and high-performing business.

The senior leadership team knew that the cultural journey would not arrive at a constructive destination until it shifted the behaviours, mindset and attitude of over 8,000 people across Australian and New Zealand.

This meant transforming the leadership team was crucial to modelling the desired behaviours.

Solution

Although Ingham's had operational strength and scale, the leadership recognised the urgent need for cultural renewal to support business transformation. They embarked on a journey blending strategic discipline with culture leadership initiatives to create a new way of working – The Ingham's Way.

1. Leadership-Led Culture Change:

Senior leaders modelled the desired cultural shift, investing in leadership development tools like Leadership/Impact® (L/I).

2. Structured Strategic Planning Cycle:

Introduced a disciplined and transparent annual planning process, enhancing strategic clarity and resource efficiency.

3. Enterprise Thinking and Cross-Functional Collaboration:

Shifted focus from siloed functions to shared goals, building collaboration across operations, supply chain, marketing, and sales.

4. Employee Value Proposition and Critical Behaviours:

Developed a clear EVP and defined critical behaviours aligned to Ingham's values of Integrity, Courage, and Excellence.

5. The Ingham's Way:

Articulated a clear purpose ("Deliciously good food, in the best way") and an ambition to be "Australia and New Zealand's first choice for poultry."

6. Stronger, Board-Executive Alignment:

Regular, transparent communication rebuilt trust and strategic alignment between the leadership team and the board.

Outcomes

Record Business Performance:

Highest ever earnings and dividend results since listing, backed by a strong balance sheet ready to fuel growth.

Cultural Transformation in Progress:

Significant shift in leadership behaviours at senior levels, paving the way for broader organisational change across 8,000 employees.

Enhanced Customer Partnerships:

Deepened collaboration with major customers like Coles, Woolworths, KFC, and McDonald's, driven by operational transparency and customer-centricity.

Operational Excellence at Scale:

Managed a vast network of 25 million birds on farms at any time, while maintaining RSPCA/SPCA animal welfare accreditation.

Social License to Operate Strengthened:

Ongoing commitment to animal welfare, biosecurity, and ethical supply chain practices.

Key Learnings

Culture drives performance:

Ingham's success shows the direct link between investing in leadership, culture, and business results.

Leadership must lead:

Executive sponsorship and leadership modelling are non-negotiable for cultural transformation.

Strategic alignment is critical:

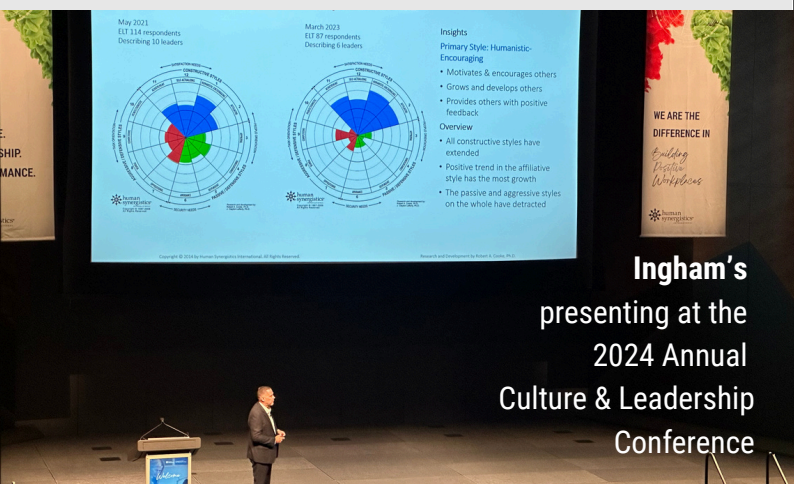
A clear, structured strategic planning cycle creates organisational focus and reduces noise.

Customer intimacy matters:

Sophisticated customer expectations demand operational transparency and strategic partnership.

Never underestimate the scale of change:

Transforming the mindsets and behaviours of 8,000 employees requires patience, consistency, and courage.



Ingham's
presenting at the
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Culture & Leadership
Conference

