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Agri-food Leadership Case Study: Patsy Bass and Reefton Distilling Co.

Helena Avery
Jordan Mayes
Gabrielle Wall
Peter Cammock



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Jordan Mayes
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Peter Cammock**

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**Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit
P O Box 85084
Lincoln University
Lincoln 7647
New Zealand**

Ph: (64) (3) 423 0372

<http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/AERU/>

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Abstract

This is the fifth case study in a series analysing leadership in New Zealand agri-food companies. It is part of the Unlocking Export Prosperity Research Programme led by the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU) at Lincoln University. This case study examines how leadership contributes to successful value-adding at Reefton Distilling Co. Effective leadership has been instrumental to the success of the distillery and is closely connected to successful innovation, coordination and marketing. Patsy Bass provides an example of how effective leadership can positively contribute to value-adding processes. Her approach to leadership at Reefton Distilling Co. reflects the attributes discussed in the earlier literature review. Patsy and her team centre the distillery's core purpose, deeply held values and differentiation strategy in all the decisions made around their range of products and how they are developed.

Keywords

Value Chains; Leadership; Innovation; Distilling; Calling.

ANZSRC Fields of Research

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Executive Summary

Background

This is the fifth in a series of case studies analysing how effective leadership is antecedent to value-adding to agri-food products in New Zealand's primary sector. It is part of a wider Unlocking Export Prosperity Research Programme. The value-adding elements being considered are physical attributes like appearance and flavour, cultural attributes like connection to the local history and community, and credence attributes like social inclusion, and environmental stewardship. This case study examines how leadership contributes to successful value-adding at Reefton Distilling Co.

Patsy Bass returned to Reefton with a desire to contribute to the revitalisation of the town that had given her so much. After consultation with the community around what business could contribute to the local economy and also showcase all that Reefton has to offer, Reefton Distilling Co. was created. Once Patsy committed to opening a distillery, her efforts turned towards who could best support her vision for producing high quality products that showcase the native botanicals and local spring water sources found in Reefton's natural environment. Local twins Nigel and Steffan MacKay were employed as brand ambassadors, foragers and water prospectors. Nick Secker worked closely with Patsy to perfect Reefton Distilling Co.'s range of small batch spirits and liqueurs that now achieve a price premium in domestic and offshore markets. Reefton Distilling Co. has won many international awards for their high-quality products, establishing them as one of New Zealand's top distilleries.

Since its opening in 2018, the distillery has grown rapidly, expanding into a new, larger facility that increases production capacity, provides more employment and education opportunities, and is expected to attract more tourists to the area. Patsy and her team are committed to keeping the business in Reefton. While there are logistical challenges posed by dispatching products from an isolated location, their core purpose of contributing to the revitalisation of Reefton, underpins the distillery's business model and decision making.

This case study examines how Patsy Bass' leadership has contributed to the success of Reefton Distilling Co and the high-quality spirits and liqueurs they produce and export. A model of value-added leadership, informed by an earlier literature review, will guide this case study. This model describes how leadership contributes to different value-adding processes at Reefton Distilling Co., and how this value is communicated to customers.

Purpose, Values, and Differentiated Strategy

Reefton Distilling Co. has a strong core purpose centred around the revitalisation of Reefton township. Patsy's return to Reefton was based around her desire to give back to the community, by creating jobs and bringing money into the town. Every aspect of the distillery's business model is focused on how they can create products that showcase all that the community, and its history has to offer, whilst generating economic benefits for the town and wider region.

The business' deeply held principles ensure that the distillery's business decisions reflect its core purpose. Reefton Distilling Co. is committed to showcasing aspects of the native botanicals and spring water sources found in Reefton's natural environment, alongside stories and figures from the town's

rich history. This commitment to embodying the “spirit of the West Coast” by producing high quality spirits and liqueurs shows how they embed two key principles, showcasing Reefton and high quality, into their range of agri-food products. It is these principles that ensure that Reefton Distilling Co. is unique when compared to other distilleries. Their background and inclusion of the community are key points of difference and are communicated to consumers to increase the market value of their products in New Zealand and abroad.

Innovation

Product and process innovation have been found to contribute to positive value-adding to agri-food products. At Reefton Distilling Co. product innovation can be seen in their ongoing experimentation and expansion of the range of spirits and liqueurs they produce. One example of product innovation can be seen in the development of Moonlight Creek Whisky, their first whisky product which is due to enter the market in 2025-26. This example shows how Reefton Distilling Co. are open to taking risks in their pursuit of revitalising Reefton despite the extensive time and costs associated with producing whisky. Alongside product innovation, process innovation has been essential to the expansion of the distillery. Moving into a larger facility has meant that they need to develop operating procedures that will allow the distillery to produce higher quantities of their products and streamline their current processes.

Effective leadership is essential for successful innovation. Patsy embodies attributes associated with transformational leadership. This can be seen in the experiences of distillers Nick Secker and Beth Scott who recognise that Patsy and her passion for revitalising Reefton was a key reason why they wanted to work at Reefton Distilling Co. She also exhibits attributes of authentic leadership, seen in her commitment to Reefton Distilling Co.’s core purpose and deeply-held principles. Further, the relationships that she has fostered amongst the distillery staff and wider community has resulted in the community developing a sense of ownership over “their distillery”.

Coordination

Alongside innovation, coordination is another important value-adding process relied upon at Reefton Distilling Co. to allow their products to achieve a price premium. Coordination can be vertical or horizontal. At Reefton Distilling Co. an example can be seen in their collaboration with Swanndri to produce a limited-edition gin branded with Swanndri’s unique black and red tartan. Working alongside New Zealand companies like Swanndri raises awareness of the distillery whilst aligning with the distillery’s core purpose and deeply held principles.

Successful coordination requires leadership that fosters collaboration. Collaborative leaders take responsibility for achieving their businesses’ shared goals by working closely with their team and external stakeholders, encouraging innovation and ensuring the operational success of those working alongside them. Patsy embodies this approach to leadership at Reefton Distilling Co., as seen in the close relationship she has fostered with the wider Reefton community through their involvement in all aspects of the distillery’s operations and by the provision of employment, investment and education opportunities.

Marketing Strategies

Reefton Distilling Co. is market-oriented. It is focused on attracting a domestic and international customer base to buy their products at a price premium and therefore contribute to the regeneration of the Reefton economy. The distillery is not exclusively profit driven, rather they are driven by their core purpose. This involves generating profit to support the community and to contribute to the expansion of the distillery which creates more job opportunities for Reefton locals.

When marketing their products in international markets the distillery uses 'Made in New Zealand' marketing approaches to garner a price premium. This approach draws on the high quality of their products and the botanicals used to make them whilst appealing to the consumer's sense of connection with and escapism into the New Zealand West Coast rainforest. The imagery and language used across the distillery's marketing showcases the native environment surrounding Reefton with a special focus on the native botanicals and spring water sources that are used in their products. Communicating these aspects to consumers in offshore markets reinforces the distillery's inclusion of their core purpose and deeply held principles across their business model whilst also offering something "a little unexpected" to the international consumer.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This case study is the fifth in a series of case studies exploring the role of leadership in New Zealand agri-food exporting organisations. These cases show how leadership contributes to adding value to agricultural products in New Zealand, allowing them to garner a price premium in domestic and offshore markets. Specifically this case addresses the question that is central to this research which is: “How can local enterprises achieve higher returns by ensuring their global consumers understand the distinctive qualities of the physical, credence and cultural attributes of agri-food products made in New Zealand (Saunders, et. al, 2017, p. viii)?

Physical attributes are “features of a product such as flavour, texture, appearance, odour/aroma and convenience that consumers are able to judge using their own senses and experience” (Saunders et al, 2017, p. 5). Credence attributes are “features of a product that are claimed by producers but must be taken on trust by consumers; examples are food safety, animal welfare, environmental stewardship and social inclusion. (Saunders, et. al, 2017, p. 5). Cultural attributes are “features of a product that are due to the culture of the enterprises involved in its production; this might include indigenous authenticity or a long history of passionate family-run enterprise” (Saunders, et al, 2017, p. 5).

The literature review and the case studies that have preceded this case, make it clear that effective leadership is “an important element in creating [and marketing] quality products that combine physical, credence and cultural attributes that are valued by consumers” (Saunders, et al, 2017, p. 6). Value-adding is especially salient when considering the highly complex, dynamic and competitive nature of the international markets that New Zealand agriculture competes in. This case study is focused on the leadership attributes exhibited at Reefton Distilling Co., a Reefton based distillery that produces high quality spirits and liqueurs that showcase the best natural ingredients that New Zealand has to offer.

Drawing on the location's rich history, Patsy Bass, founder and Chief Executive of the distillery, returned to her hometown with one goal, to give back to the town that had given her so much. In consultation with the Reefton community it was decided that a distillery showcasing the native botanicals and the surrounding natural water springs would best represent the people of the town, past and present. The distillery has grown rapidly after opening its doors in October 2018.

Central to their business model is the creation of jobs for locals, providing education and training opportunities, attracting visitors to the West Coast and ring-fencing shares for community members. This ensures that the business is one that the wider Reefton community can be proud of. This commitment to the Reefton community and its surrounding environment sets Reefton Distilling Co. apart from its competitors.

This case study shows how value is added to the range of products produced at Reefton Distilling Co. and the leadership characteristics that have contributed to their success. Like the previous case studies,



leadership underpins the value-adding success. What sets the distillery apart is their commitment to the revitalisation of Reefton, a central theme throughout this case study. Where applicable, quotes from Patsy Bass, co-founder and Chief Executive of the distillery and other members of her team are used to support the discussion.

Chapter 2

Reefton Distilling Co.

2.1 The Origins of Reefton Distilling Co.

Reefton Distilling Co. was established in 2017 to contribute to the regeneration of the Reefton township and the wider West Coast. Patsy Bass, the distillery's founder and chief executive, returned to Reefton determined to play a part in the revitalisation of the town she has remained intimately connected to throughout her life. Since opening their doors, Reefton Distilling Co. has expanded into offshore markets, increased their range of high quality, locally sourced and crafted spirits and liqueurs, and worked to attract a dedicated team with a shared passion for showcasing all that Reefton and its surrounding environment has to offer.

Patsy returned to Reefton committed to creating something that could contribute to the regeneration of the small, West Coast township. She recognised that, "It feels right that I roll up my sleeves and go back ... we can't expect other people to do it if we're not prepared to do it ourselves. So let's go and do something that hopefully will bring other people to [invest in the] town over time." Patsy and her husband moved to Reefton permanently in 2018. She recognised that they had to, "Do something that will create jobs. Because my elderly Aunts and Uncles were in their twilight years, or had passed away and I thought what's going to happen when that generation's gone and many of the young ones have moved away for work." It was for this reason that Reefton Distilling Co. was born. Alongside other key members of the Reefton community, the distillery has been an integral aspect of the resurgence of the town. It has attracted extensive media coverage, which in turn has brought numerous visitors to the town and contributed to its economic prosperity.

The decision to open a distillery came while Patsy was on holiday in Reefton. She knew that she wanted to create something that would represent the community and its surrounding natural environment, whilst honouring the rich history of the Reefton area. In fact, she had always wanted to "make the West Coast rain sexy". Exploring the concept of a distillery, Patsy bumped into old family friends, Nigel and Steffan MacKay, and sought their feedback. When they supported the concept and said they had what they believed to be the largest private whisky bottle collection in the Southern Hemisphere, the wheels were firmly set in motion. Despite Patsy being a non-drinker, "Things kept leading back to a distillery" and she soon recognised that, "Everything about the local natural environment made for quality gin production" and from there Reefton Distilling Co. was born (Andrew, 2021; Farmlands, 2021). The MacKay twins are now brand ambassadors and are responsible for foraging for native botanicals from the surrounding rainforest.

Once committed to establishing a distillery, Patsy's next challenge was to secure a distiller to scale up the sample products. This person needed to share the same passion for the West Coast and have a strong sense of community. Nick Secker returned from his OE, drawn home to the West Coast because

of the unique opportunity to create high quality products in the rainforests he'd grown up in. Nick was attracted to Reefton Distilling Co. because, "It was so intricately involved with the West Coast" and offered him the opportunity to develop his own personal distilling style whilst showcasing ingredients native only to the area (George, 2020, Timestamp 47:44; Writer, 2020).

Beth Scott joined the team in 2019 to help keep up with growing demand, and spoke about coming to the distillery because, "I've always been drawn back to the West Coast, same as Patsy, I don't know if it's a mixture of things, but I feel like it's a combination" (Thompson, June 2021, Timestamp 23:26). Nick and Beth's experiences further illustrate how Reefton Distilling Co. embodies its commitment to regenerating Reefton township by attracting young, skilled workers back to the West Coast to produce high quality products that show the rest of the world all that the region has to offer.

Reefton Distilling Co. has incorporated its core purpose, the revitalisation of Reefton, into key aspects of their business model. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, demand for their products has grown exponentially. This has allowed them to expand into a new larger facility which offers the distillery greater production capacities (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, pp. 7-8). Patsy recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased the amount of (local) tourism coming to Reefton and the wider West Coast, "Since the first lockdown ... Everyone seems to have come to the West Coast and they come through our cellar door saying 'Oh, we've read about you in this or that and we wanted to come'". Patsy succinctly describes the distillery's purpose as, "To produce premium New Zealand botanical spirits and fruit liqueurs in Reefton New Zealand, to create jobs, provide a tourist attraction and to contribute to the regional economy" (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 8). This explains how Reefton Distilling Co.'s business decisions are made with the Reefton community in mind and the role of the distillery in the wider regeneration of the town Patsy calls home.

2.2 Economic Regeneration in Small Town New Zealand

Over the past three decades Reefton, like many small New Zealand towns has seen a decline in their population and labour force and falling housing prices (Perkins, et al, 2019, p. 145). This has been accompanied by a neglect in regional economic policy, rebooted only in 2019 with the establishment of two key initiatives, the Rural Communities and Rural Proofing programme and the Regional Economic Development programme which includes the Provincial Growth Fund portfolio (Perkins, et al, 2019, p. 140). Patsy returned to Reefton to contribute to its economic regeneration, recognising that with the aging population and the closing of nearby mines, which had been one of the community's primary sources of income, she had a unique opportunity to create something that could give back to her hometown. Her goal was to help generate jobs, tourism and economic flow. A goal supported by a belief that you can do anything, anywhere - as long as you do it well.

Economic regeneration provides small town New Zealand with the opportunity to reimagine the future of their communities by generating sustainable economic flow which corresponds with growth in available employment, housing and business opportunities. Economic regeneration can be defined as, "The reinvigoration of local and regional economics, and associated improvements in economic competitiveness and prosperity" (Forest Research, 2021). Successful economic regeneration is complex and relies on community-wide collaboration, effective governance and locally based leadership (Levy, et al, 2021; Perkins, et al, 2019, p. 141). Typically, economic regeneration involves inward investment, the relocation of business and housing, and a focus on business start-ups,

employment and education (Forest Research, 2021). Initiatives are typically complex and multifaceted, targeting employment, property and tourism and rely on both public and private funding (Perkins, et al, 2019, p.148).

In the case of Reefton Distilling Co., Patsy decided to return to the town and create something that would contribute to the economic regeneration of Reefton by providing jobs, economic flow and a tourist attraction. Patsy spoke about her return to Reefton, “This woman walked past the distillery before opening and spotted ‘George’ [their 1800L copper pot still] in the window. She said to her children ‘That’s George, he’s come to town to create jobs for people like Mum and Dad’. So that’s the community really understanding what we are trying to do here ... It was never about alcohol. It was about jobs and revitalising a town.” Patsy worked alongside the community to establish a business that would show Reefton and the wider community that if, “You can set up a really sustainable business in Reefton, someone else will go ‘I can do that’ ... and it’s happening now, others have moved here now, and/or purchased residential and commercial property, and over the next five years there will be a number of new initiatives popping up.”

Reefton Distilling Co.’s impact on Reefton is evidenced by the financial data showcasing the revitalisation of Reefton township since the foundation of the distillery. In the year from June 2020 to May 2021 there was a \$7.2 million tourism spend in Reefton, this is up 47 percent compared to the previous year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and corresponding border restrictions (ChristchurchNZ, 2021). During the same period, the wider West Coast region’s tourism spending was down 5 percent (ChristchurchNZ, 2021). This suggests that the distillery has directly contributed to the economic regeneration of Reefton. Further, Reefton has the fastest growing house prices across all of the West Coast over the past two years to December 2020, up 11.4 percent per annum (ChristchurchNZ, 2021).

Although these figures cannot be exclusively linked to the establishment of Reefton Distilling Co. the distillery’s rapid expansion, alongside the success of their marketing strategies which heavily promote the Reefton community and its surrounding natural environment, suggests that they have been an important part of the revitalisation of the small West Coast township. The success of Patsy and the distillery’s economic regeneration efforts in Reefton shows how small businesses that produce high quality, high value products can be instrumental in revitalising small town New Zealand communities.

As shown in their origin story, Reefton Distilling Co. was established in response to community input about what Reefton had in abundance and what was unique about it. From this feedback, Patsy set her mind on a distillery, having lived her early years on the local site of Westland Breweries. The distillery’s rapid success resulted in them outgrowing their original premises and needing to raise capital to expand into a new, larger facility. They are New Zealand’s second largest and fastest growing premium gin brand. Recording a 170 percent revenue growth in the 2020-2021 financial year.¹ Reefton Distilling Co.’s domestic revenue is on track for \$4 million and the company was valued at \$26 million in late 2021.

To assist in their expansion, the distillery received a \$928,000 loan from the Provincial Growth fund, public funding available to businesses and initiatives to contribute to economic development across

¹ Based on NielsenIQ data for off-premise sales for 12 months from July 2020 to June 2021 by Reefton Distilling Co.

regional New Zealand (Guildford, 2020; MBIE, 2017). The relocation and fitout provided short term local construction jobs and allowed them to increase supply, already providing 13 full time, permanent jobs, and up to 12 casual, part time and volunteer at the distillery with the capacity for more in the future (Guildford, 2020). Communities Minister Damien O'Connor recognised that, "This employment growth is significant in a small town like Reefton" (Guildford, 2020). Reefton Distilling Co.'s commitment to contribute to the economic regeneration of Reefton by providing jobs, education opportunities and increasing tourism is evidenced throughout their business model and sets them apart from their competitors in New Zealand and abroad.

Chapter 3

The Importance of Leadership

This case study explores how the leadership qualities exhibited at Reefton Distilling Co. have allowed them to achieve a price premium in domestic and offshore markets. The distillery provides an example of how effective leadership alongside strongly held cultural, physical and credence values, and a clear core purpose are important aspects for the production of premium agricultural products. Patsy Bass' leadership, supported by other key distillery team members, has been central to the rapid growth and success of Reefton Distilling Co. They have mastered the production of high quality spirits and liqueurs showcasing native botanicals and the West Coast's spring water sources, whilst contributing to the regeneration of the Reefton township.

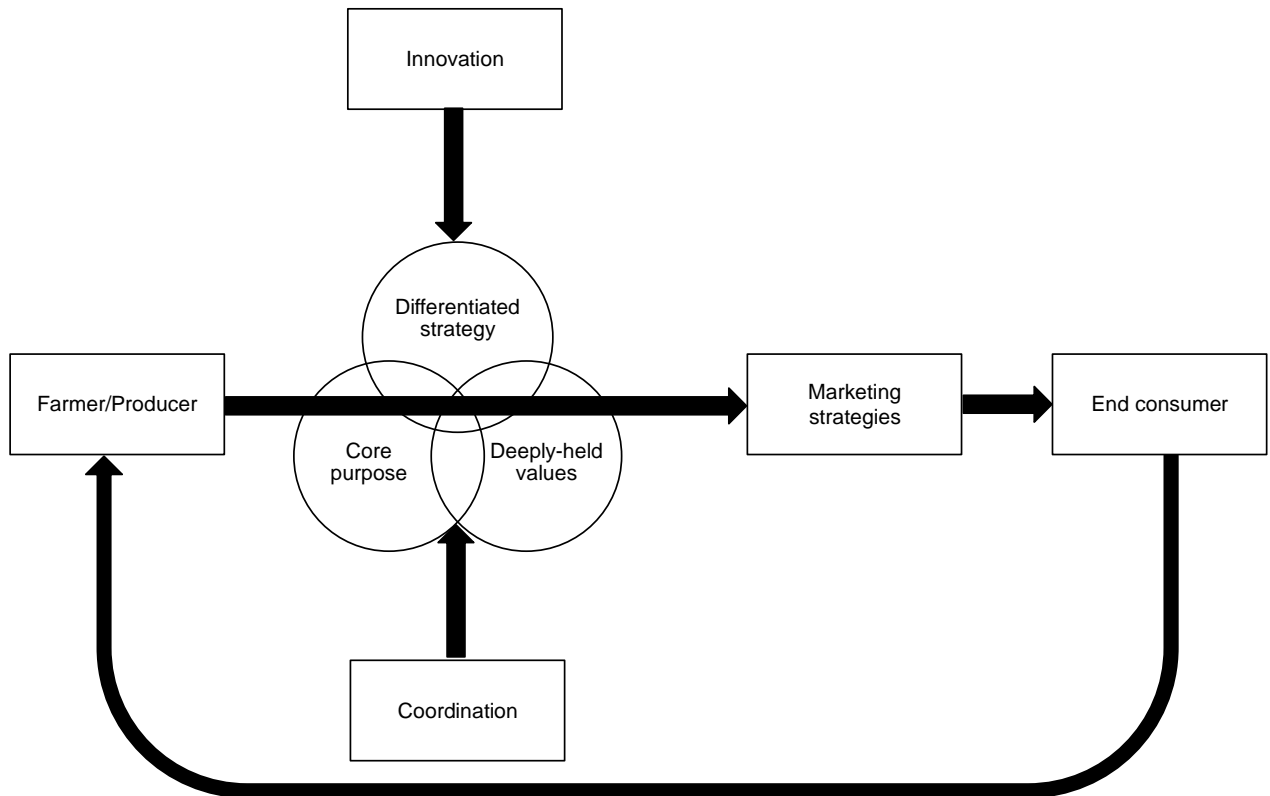
The remainder of this case study will analyse how leadership has influenced the success of Reefton Distilling Co. with specific focus on Patsy Bass who participated in interviews as part of this project. The model of value-adding leadership will be used to analyse where and how leadership qualities exhibited by staff at the distillery have helped them to produce the high quality spirits and liqueurs that have garnered a price premium in New Zealand and beyond. After describing Reefton Distilling Co.'s core purpose, principles and differentiated strategy, the leadership qualities positively impacting innovation, coordination and the marketing strategies utilised by the distillery will be discussed. This will hopefully provide insight into how value-added leadership has positively contributed to the success of Reefton Distilling Co.

A Model of Value-Adding Leadership

As with the previous case studies, a model of value-adding leadership was used to analyse Reefton Distilling Co. The value-adding leadership model, shown in Figure 1 below, was informed by the earlier literature review. The model shows how innovation, coordination and effective marketing can add value to New Zealand agricultural products. When expressed and realised within the organisation's purpose, guiding principles and strategy, these elements can add value to the product that reaches the end consumer. Effective leadership is crucial, both to the creation of added value and to ensuring that this added value is communicated to and experienced by the end consumer, thereby allowing the product to achieve a price premium.

The value-adding leadership model provides the structure for the remainder of this case study. The first part of the discussion focuses on purpose, guiding principles, and differentiated strategy. The relationship between these elements and innovation, coordination and Reefton Distilling Co.'s marketing strategies are then discussed alongside how different aspects of leadership have positively influenced the success of the distillery.

Figure 1: Model of Value-Added Leadership



Chapter 4

Leadership and Reefton Distilling Co.

4.1 Core Purpose

Collins and Porras (1994, p.73) define purpose as “the organization’s fundamental reason for existence beyond just making money - a perpetual guiding star on the horizon; not to be confused with specific goals or business strategies”. More recently Quinn and Thakor (2018, pp. 79, 85) suggest that purpose “explains how people involved with an organization are making a difference [which] gives them a sense of meaning, and draws their support ... By tapping into that power” they conclude, “you can transform an organization”.

A central element of Patsy Bass’ leadership has been her capacity to create and articulate a profound sense of purpose which has been transformational for both Reefton Distilling Co. and the Reefton township itself. As discussed above, her commitment to the revitalisation of the Reefton township is central to this purpose. In an interview with Marcel Thompson, another New Zealand distiller, she succinctly describes Reefton Distilling Co.’s purpose (Thompson, May 2021, Timestamp 1:44):

It’s about restoring a town, revitalising a town, creating jobs for locals, and creating a reason for visitors to come and stay here, so a tourist attraction. So that’s what the business is and it just happens to be that we make spirits and liqueurs to do that.

The dedication to regenerating the small West Coast community led to the establishment of a distillery, designed specifically to showcase Reefton’s local history, its surrounding native environment, and to create something that the township are proud of. Reefton Distilling Co. (2021a) recognise that, “Reefton was an entrepreneurial and prosperous place in its early days, and we in turn plan to add the success story of Reefton Distilling Co. to the history books”.

Every aspect of Reefton Distilling Co.’s origin story and business model embodies their commitment to revitalising Reefton township. Its origin story is one of regeneration of a town through the provision of local jobs, education and creating a tourist attraction. Patsy spoke to this point, “It was never about alcohol. It’s always been about jobs and revitalising a town and creating a reason for people to come and stay.” This ethos underpins all the decisions made around their range of products, how they are produced, who they work with and how to expand the business as demand grows.

Since opening their doors in 2018 the distillery now employs 21 people in a combination of roles. Driving all of their decision-making Patsy recognises that, “Reefton Distilling Co. has always been about doing the right thing, for the right reasons, to help the West Coast economy” (Graham, 2021).

Reefton Distilling Co.’s purpose is very personal for Patsy. As she commented, “Reefton always just felt like home ... [At one point] I realised I’ve seen myself as a Coaster living in Christchurch, rather than a Cantabrian born on the West Coast ... The West Coast’s been in my DNA my whole life ... We [moved

here] and everything has a memory attached; walking into stores with my mother as a child, adventures with my cousins and time with family friends”. The personal identification fuelled Patsy’s desire to contribute to Reefton’s revitalisation:

We said if we are going to move here, we’ve got to do something that will create jobs and contribute. Let’s do something and hopefully that will bring other people to town over time and it can become a lifestyle town and not just an extraction and accommodation town. That’s very much happened now.

Patsy’s desire to create jobs and contribute to the revitalisation of Reefton fits closely with the definition of “credence” and “cultural attributes” discussed above. As John Brakenridge, CEO of NZ Merino, stated, the credence and cultural elements that are embodied in this purpose have particular relevance for “socially conscious consumers”:

When the wiring is right, socially conscious consumers are not only buying the highest quality products, but are experiencing a connection with the land, families and communities that produce the product and with a value-set that enables them to feel like they are contributing to a more natural, sustainable and better world.

In this case, the desire to make a social contribution and the powerful sense of history and place that is embedded in Reefton Distilling Co.’s purpose is central to its success and provides an authentic sense of community that is central to its identity and strategy and to its capacity to realise a price premium for its products.

4.2 Guiding Principles

Reefton Distilling Co.’s success can also be attributed to the deeply held principles that address key physical, credence, and cultural attributes and are enacted in the decisions made by the distillery. These principles guide all elements of the business to ensure that their products are premium and high value and support the core purpose (Sullivan, Sullivan & Buffton, 2001). There are five key principles that can be seen as fundamental to the Reefton Distilling Co. These are:

1. Showcasing and honouring Reefton and its surrounding environment
2. Quality
3. Uniqueness and individuality
4. Supporting community growth
5. Environmental responsibility

Showcasing and honouring Reefton and its surrounding environment

Showcasing all that the Reefton township and its wider natural environment has to offer is one of the central principles of the Reefton Distilling Co. This principle is embedded within their core purpose and guides the distillery as they continue to grow. The distillery recognises that “our history defines us” (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021a). This can be seen in the stories of Bridget ‘Biddy’ Goodwin and George Fairweather Moonlight which have inspired the spirits produced, their gin range and the soon to launch whisky products respectively (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, pp. 13 & 19).

The distillery aspires to embody the “spirit of the West Coast” within the range of products they produce, further illustrating how authentically showcasing the Reefton township and surrounding environment is one of the brand's deeply held cultural principles (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021b). Authenticity is important. Patsy spoke to this point, “We wanted our brand and our products to be premium, but we wanted it to be authentic, real, you know, like the stories. I wasn’t just going to come up with a name and chuck it on the bottle”.

Nick Secker, the head distiller at Reefton Distilling Co. came to the business because of its representation of the West Coast. In a radio interview he spoke to this point, “It [Reefton Distilling Co.] was so intricately involved with the West Coast with the marketing, the story and what they were going for ... it was meant to be in a way I think” (George, 2020, Timestamp 47:44).

Working closely alongside the distillery are the MacKay twins, born and bred locals with extensive knowledge of the town, its history and the nearby spring water sources and native botanicals (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, pp. 28-29). These two were intricately linked to the development of Reefton Distilling Co. and are proud to be involved in a business that has brought so much to their town. The Twins involvement was integral to the distillery’s capacity to produce high quality products and expand, thereby increasing available jobs and opportunities for the Reefton community.

Their products draw on and showcase the native environment surrounding Reefton. The work of the MacKay twins was central, in the early days, to the distillery’s ability to source and capture the features of the high quality botanicals found in the surrounding rainforest. Key members of the Reefton Distilling Co. team since its conceptualisation, the two Reefton locals have foraged for native botanicals, identified local water springs and shed light on the rich history of the Reefton township (2021d, pp. 28-29). Reefton Distilling Co.’s commitment to incorporating all that Reefton has to offer shows how this value has been implemented across the brand.

Quality

Quality has been a central Reefton Distilling value from the beginning. “One thing I’ve learnt,” reflected Patsy, “is that you can do anything, anywhere - if you do it well. So we take great care with everything we do”. Patsy recognised that, “everything about the local natural environment made for quality gin production” (Andrew, 2021). “We happen to have really good water, really good botanicals, all of these key ingredients”. These natural resources have allowed Reefton Distilling Co. to produce a range of products, each recognised for its high quality and unique regional attributes (2021b).

Added to the use of unique natural resources is expertise in small batch production and in the details of the distilling process. As recognised by Patsy:

Where the magic comes in, is understanding how to refine the flavours ... So we get the best people ... We’ve already got a unique flavour profile. Our products [are] world class. Within five months [of opening] we had five awards in San Francisco and New Zealand.

Clearly physical attributes, like a unique flavour profile, are key to adding quality and value. Added to the tangible physical attributes of the product are credence attributes such as the stewardship of the local botanicals and spring water and cultural attributes around the sense of place and history of the area. These elements together create a strong platform for marketing a high quality product.

The distinctiveness of the West Coast flavours are reinforced with the macro story of revitalising Reefton and the personal stories of people like that of Bridget “Biddy” Goodwin and George Fairweather Moonlight who were the inspiration behind the Little Biddy Gin and Moonlight Creek Whisky brands. As Patsy noted:

It’s taking NZ botanical gin to the world. But Reefton is still the story behind it. It’s not just about selling the gin. This is about revitalising a town. It’s about that story and making the abundant West Coast rain sexy.

There are so many stories here and they are all real stories. The Twins told me about the prospectors George Fairweather Moonlight and Bridget ‘Biddy’ Goodwin. Our design company came up with Little Biddy and Moonlight Creek [as the brands]. It just came together. We put legs around it & Little Biddy [gin] has been taken all around the world.

These stories add further strength to the value adding potency of the physical, credence and cultural attributes that are the foundation of Reefton Distilling Co.’s success.

Patsy understands the relationship between quality and authenticity. “Everything had to be premium. But we wanted it to be authentic ... The brand story, it’s real. Everything about it is real. There are so many stories here and they are all real stories”. These stories add to a unique mix of value adding attributes that augment the quality of their products. “Fresh native botanicals, pristine water and passionate people - all locally sourced. This is the unofficial recipe that sets Reefton Distilling Co. apart” (Swanddri, 2021).

Focusing on the quality of their products and their natural origins has seen the distillery become recognised as one of the top in New Zealand. In 2021, at the New Zealand Spirits Awards, Reefton Distilling Co. walked away with six top awards showing how their quality focus is recognised by the wider distilling community (Restaurant & Café, 2021). Their multi-award winning Wild Rain Vodka embodies this quality focus. It won both Best New Zealand Vodka and Best Overall Vodka in Category and was recognised as an “absolutely fantastic” product by national and international industry experts (Restaurant & Café, 2021). At the time of writing, Wild Rain Vodka had also claimed Gold in the International Spirits Competition.

Patsy referred to how, “I’ve always wanted to make the rain sexy”. Wild Rain vodka, of which water is the main ingredient, achieves this goal, seamlessly integrating the distillery’s focus on showcasing the Reefton environment with high quality production techniques to produce a price premium product. This provides one example of how Patsy’s vision for the distillery and her focus on quality has seen Reefton Distilling Co. produce spirits and liqueurs that earn a price premium and succeed in the market.

Uniqueness and individuality

Reefton Distilling Co. is committed to showcasing “the taste of native New Zealand botanicals” across their range of products, setting them apart from other distilleries (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021a). Their website proudly advertises the uniqueness of its environment in the photography chosen and media copy like, “The hills surrounding our distillery are rich with botanical gold” (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021e). As explained by distiller Beth Scott, their contemporary style range of gins were created specifically to, “Capture the flavours and essence of the West Coast” (Thompson, June 2021,

Timestamp 37:24). Patsy reaffirms Beth's comments, "We didn't want to try to copy any other gin. We thought, we are just going to bottle the West Coast. This is what we've created. We are bottling the West Coast".

The focus on the natural environment is a key point of differentiation for the brand and can be seen across the media platforms. The role of the MacKay twins is also unique to the distillery. They are described as "Ambassadors and Water Prospectors" who are "authorities on everything there is to know about the area, its people and its history," ensuring that the distillery stays true to the community it seeks to represent (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 26 & 28-29). Reefton Distilling Co.'s location and locally foraged spring water and botanicals set them apart from other distilleries and embodies their commitment to showcasing the West Coast as a prime location for producing unique, high quality spirits and liqueurs that garner a price premium. A story that Patsy tells, reflects Reefton Distilling Co.'s success in creating a unique product.

I had a chap sitting at the counter one day...and he just kept smelling it [Little Biddy gin]. And I thought, Oh God, he doesn't like it. Next minute he looked up with tears in his eyes and said to me, "You've bottled my childhood". He was from the West Coast, but hadn't been back for 17 years. We get those kind of really powerful reactions and it's pretty cool.

The background story of Reefton Distilling Co. adds to its uniqueness. Despite Patsy having no prior knowledge about how to run a distillery, the company was founded following community forums focused on what business venture would best support the community, whilst paying homage to its rich history (Farmlands, 2021). Centring their business around the needs of the Reefton community sets Reefton Distilling Co. apart from other private enterprises. The distillery offers the community jobs, education and training opportunities, and also acts as a tourist attraction for the town which has had flow on effects for other local businesses (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 5; Graham, 2021).

Further, they are committed to keeping the business in Reefton, even if a buyout was offered because as Patsy recognises, "We wouldn't want anyone to take it away and strip the heart out of it" (Andrew, 2021). This sense of community forms the basis of Reefton Distilling Co. and sets it apart from businesses who are solely profit driven. Although economic growth is important to the distillery, it is the revitalisation of Reefton that drives their business and supports this success.

Supporting community growth

A key driver at Reefton Distilling Co. is their pursuit of community growth in Reefton. This deeply held principle is closely related to their core purpose of revitalising Reefton to its former glory and establishing opportunities for the community within their township. From the way the company was founded through to their current expansion plans, every decision made by Reefton Distilling Co. is centred around how their business can best support the Reefton community. Patsy discusses how since its foundation the distillery, "Has always been about doing the right thing, for the right reasons, to help the West Coast economy (Graham, 2021). Community growth was the reason behind the distillery's establishment and continues to be reflected in all the decisions made.

The Reefton community have welcomed the distillery as a core part of their town, referring to it as "their distillery" when showing the distillery to visitors (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 1). Patsy spoke to the community's positive reception of the distillery, "The community, all of them. We have

shopkeepers, we don't need a notice anywhere, they'll say 'Have you been to our distillery?' to everybody that comes into the shop and if anyone goes 'no', they'll bring them down".

Reefton Distilling Co. have worked hard to include the community throughout the creation of their business. They established a distillery because of the history of the town as a gold mining hub and its moonshine history, consulted with the public, gave community members the first opportunities to invest in the business and have since provided education and training for young people through work experience and internship opportunities (Graham, 2021). These decisions were made by Patsy because, "We wanted the community to own it, so when they say to visitors, 'have you been to our distillery?' It is actually their distillery. It had to be a community effort" (Andrew, 2021). And we wanted to provide viable, long term, well-paying career options for young people so they didn't need to leave town.

Every aspect of Reefton Distilling Co. is centred around the Reefton community and its growth making this value one of their most important. Thus far it is evident to all their customers and the general public who engage with their brand that the Reefton township and its prosperity is what drives Reefton Distilling Co. to continue to produce high quality products that showcase all that the West Coast has to offer.

Environmental responsibility

The native botanicals and spring water sourced from Reefton's surrounding environment are the core of their products. Honouring and maintaining the sources of these is important to Reefton Distilling Co. As production has upscaled dramatically, Patsy and her team recognised the need to change how these botanicals are sourced. This was a key consideration in the design of their new production facility. The expansion includes a garden where the botanicals used in their products can be grown regeneratively. Patsy spoke about these plans, "The site will be completely regenerated with our native, local botanicals so the distillery will be able to step out into the garden and forage for the day's distillation" (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021c, Timestamp 1:10).

Reefton Distillery Co. have also expressed interest in establishing systems and processes to further their environmental sustainability efforts and eventually become carbon zero. These include a biomass boiler, solar energy assistance, large-scale rainwater collection tanks and establishing processes to manage waste from production (MBIE, 2020, p. 5). This shows the company's understanding of the importance of protecting the surrounding natural environment to ensure it remains healthy and prosperous and to ensure that the distillery is not having an adverse impact on the Reefton community

4.3 Differentiation Strategy

A differentiated strategy is built around products and services that have unique and robust points of differentiation which make them different from and markedly better than those of their competitors. Bain and Co consultants Zook and Allen (2011), see differentiation as sitting at the core of growth and profit for organisations as it sets them apart from their competitors. In their Harvard Business Review paper they argue that (idem, p.1):

Differentiation is the essence of strategy, the prime source of competitive advantage. You earn money not just by performing a valuable task, but by being different from your

competitors in a manner that lets you serve your core customers better and more profitably. The sharper your differentiation, the greater your advantage.

As discussed above, Reefton Distilling Co.'s focus on supporting the Reefton community is core to its differentiation. Patsy speaks to this point, "It was for the love of the West Coast, a desire to create jobs for locals, and to help restore Reefton ... to its true potential (Andrew, 2021). The distillery achieves this by providing jobs, showcasing locally sourced and crafted high quality products, and generating tourism. This is a key point of differentiation setting them apart from other distilleries in New Zealand and abroad.

A further point of difference at Reefton Distilling Co. are the ingredients used in their products. Patsy speaks to this, "Reefton Distilling Co. is unique in that we use fresh native botanicals that we forage for before distillation. We use fresh rainwater and spring water to create our product" (2021c, Timestamp 0:10). The use of local, natural ingredients adds both to the quality of the products and their unique regional identity.

The West Coast environment guides the range of products produced by the distillery. Each spirit or liqueur produced showcases a unique aspect of the surrounding environment and its history. As discussed above, these elements come together in products with a "unique flavour profile" that "bottle the West Coast". Patsy summarises the key elements of the strategy in a statement that goes to the heart of Reefton Distilling Co's value proposition;

We didn't try to copy any kind of gin. We thought, we are just going to bottle the West Coast. It's all about the provenance and the purity of the freshwater. We've got some of the most pristine water on the planet ... I've always wanted to make the rain sexy. I love it. So that's what you do...And everywhere you look there's lush native rainforest ... [For native botanicals] ... And you've got this history of gold and moonshine. So obviously you do spirits ... and you do it well.

The commitment to producing high quality products that are sourced and crafted locally and benefit the local community sets Reefton Distilling Co. apart from its competitors. These elements together create a powerful strategic recipe that has allowed them to differentiate their products around distinctive physical, credence and cultural attributes and achieve a price premium in their markets.

4.4 Innovation

Innovation is a key driver of value-adding within the agricultural sector as it promotes differentiation and individuality. There are two types of innovation that should be considered in relation to agricultural product companies like Reefton Distilling Co; product innovation and process innovation. Product innovation is about changes to the range and type of final products produced. Process innovation relates to changing the operations that create those products to be more efficient and effective (Martinez-Ros, 1999). Both types of innovation should occur concurrently to add value to the range of spirits and liqueurs produced and therefore allow Reefton Distilling Co. to have a competitive market advantage (Damanpour, 2010).

Product innovation

Product innovation has been a central feature of Reefton Distilling Co. since its inception. Alongside the MacKay twins, the team recognise the capacity of the natural environment surrounding Reefton to produce high quality spirits and liqueurs. They continue to experiment with expanding and perfecting their product range to be one that best reflects the environment from which it is sourced. This can be seen in the wide range of botanicals featured in their gins and their signature Tayberry liqueur (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021b).

Patsy speaks to the relationship between the natural environment and the distillery, “We’ve got an abundance of the world's freshest water ... Then there are all the native botanicals surrounding us in the rainforest. What do you do with it? You make gin”. This relationship relies on product innovation to develop premium products on site that showcase these ingredients and therefore sets them apart from their competitors. Further, this has added value to their range of spirits and liqueurs, allowing them to achieve a price premium in domestic and international markets.

Reefton Distilling Co.’s ongoing development of new products provides a further example of product innovation. They are currently working towards the release of Moonlight Creek Whisky, another premium quality product inspired by historic risk taker and gold prospector George Fairweather Moonlight (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 19). The distillery recognises that, “Like George Moonlight we don’t seek to follow the crowds” (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 19). This quote embodies the risk taking nature of the distillery and their commitment to showcasing the Reefton community and what it has to offer above market logic. This is significant given the uncertainty around the time in cask required. It is a minimum of two years before New Zealand whisky products can enter the market (Distilled Spirits Aotearoa, 2021, p. 1). Patsy recognises that innovation and staying true to their brand are more important than being driven by pure market logic because, “The vision behind the business is bigger than the bottom line” (Andrew, 2021).

Process innovation

Within the value chain at Reefton Distilling Co. process innovation has been essential to the distillery having the capacity to expand and meet the growing demand for their products. Since the COVID-19 pandemic demand for their products has grown rapidly. Beth Scott speaks to her role in this process, “Because the company is in its infancy, we’re creating a lot of SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures] and new product development is a focus as well” (Thompson, June 2021, Timestamp 31:31). This has meant that the distillery has needed to upscale their capacity to meet the ever increasing demand, including expanding into a new larger facility, increasing the quantity of product distilled and providing more employment and education opportunities (Andrew, 2021).

Patsy recognises that, “With our expansion to a large modern production facility, we will be well positioned to meet the global demand for our products” (Graham, 2021). This expansion will have the capacity to grow key steps along the value chain including bottling and storage, support a larger production and wider team and include a garden (which will regenerate part of a former dairy farm) where the native botanicals used in their products can be cultivated (Graham, 2021). Each of these aspects enable process innovation at different stages of the value chain at Reefton Distilling Co. This has been key to ensuring that Reefton Distilling Co. has the capacity to continue to expand their range

of spirits and liqueurs and export their products at a price premium whilst remaining true to their core purpose.

Leading innovation

Patsy embodies characteristics of transformational leadership, alongside qualities attributed to authentic and leader-member exchange (LMX) leadership styles. These leadership qualities support product and process innovation at Reefton Distilling Co.

Transformational leaders are those who inspire their followers by appealing to the higher order, motivational values of those that they lead (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1999). Patsy's leadership style reflects these attributes, as does the core purpose underpinning Reefton Distilling Co. Patsy recognises that central to the revitalisation of Reefton is bringing people to the town. At the distillery this involves finding people with the skills required to support their business who are committed to moving to Reefton and contributing to its regeneration.

Patsy spoke about how, "A lot of people want to work for us desperately, but they want to do it from other parts of the country ... but it's not about that. It's about bringing people here to spend their money, to bring their families to be part of the community" (Andrew, 2021). This can be seen in the recruitment of staff like Beth Scott who, upon their return to the West Coast after travel overseas, has relocated to Reefton and become a core member of the Reefton Distilling Co. team. Beth speaks to how her joining the distillery was partly inspired by Patsy's leadership, "Once I was introduced to Patsy I decided this is a career I really wanted to pursue. I wanted to be involved in it and see it do something amazing for the West Coast as well" (Thompson, June 2021, Timestamp 21:54). Patsy's vision of the future of Reefton underpins the distillery's approach to growth and innovation and inspires her team to continue to work towards achieving this goal.

Authentic leadership is embodied by those who remain true to themselves and build credibility, trust and respect, therefore promoting authenticity amongst their followers (Avolio et al, 2004). Patsy's hard work to help turn Reefton into a more prosperous town by providing jobs and education, increasing economic flow, and attracting tourism demonstrates her commitment to authentically embodying the company's core purpose across its business model. The success of Patsy's authentic leadership can be seen in the wider Reefton community. Members of the community proudly introduce the company as "their distillery" when introducing it to visitors (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 1). This shows how the wider community has faith in Patsy and her leadership and its ability to generate positive benefits for the town. These are key elements of authentic leadership.

LMX is another style of leadership, closely related to authentic leadership. LMX refers to leader-member exchange and fosters innovation because followers are more likely to trust their leaders and therefore take beneficial risks (Rosing et al, 2011). This can be seen in the distillery's staff retention rates and the close relationships between employees, Patsy and with the wider Reefton community. Their dedication to their core purpose and trust in Patsy's leadership fosters innovation, further illustrating why Reefton Distilling Co. is so important for the revitalisation of Reefton.

These leadership attributes help Patsy inspire the Reefton Distilling Co. team to continue to work hard and take appropriate risks to grow the business and create products that showcase Reefton and garner a price premium. The entire company's commitment to its core purpose solidifies the effectiveness of

Patsy's leadership. Patsy's dedication to Reefton and the business informs the distillery's approach to innovation, especially regarding how their products can best embody the "untamed natural wilderness of the West Coast".

4.5 Entrepreneurship

Reefton Distilling Co.'s story is one of entrepreneurship. As discussed above, Patsy returned to Reefton with the sole purpose of revitalising her home town to reflect its rich past, while creating a modern tradition. Reefton Distilling Co. continues to work hard to develop new products and expand their business, looking for new ways to showcase all that the wider Reefton area has to offer. Between the work of the MacKay twins, the distilling team's ongoing efforts to develop and refine their range of products and Patsy's desire to "make the rain sexy" the spirits and liqueurs produced provide many examples of risks taken that have paid off.

The ongoing focus on improving the quality and range of products available shows how the core team at the distillery are committed to seeing the brand continue to succeed and are consistently experimenting with new ways to achieve this. Swandri, a recent collaboration partner, said about the distillery, "This is a story of optimism and entrepreneurship, of passionate people seeing opportunity where others just saw rain. It's a Kiwi success story" (2021).

Patsy's innovative leadership is key to their success. She exhibits a number of entrepreneurial leadership characteristics. This leadership style is defined by characteristics of leadership and entrepreneurship combined (Zyl & Mathur-Helm, 2007). Typically, entrepreneurial leaders contribute to opportunity recognition and exploitation in their organisations, and influence their followers by acting as role models (Renko et al, 2015, p. 69). Patsy embodied this approach when she spoke about her passion for seeing Reefton thrive and how, "It was never about alcohol, it was about jobs and revitalising a town and creating a reason for people to come and stay there ... because one thing I've learnt is that you can do anything, anywhere, if you do it well". Inspired by Patsy, the core purpose of Reefton Distilling Co. and the environment surrounding Reefton, the distillery continues to grow rapidly adding value to their products and gaining support across New Zealand and abroad.

4.5 Coordination

Coordination is one element that can contribute to adding value to premium agricultural products at any stage across the value chain. It refers to the arrangements and relationships between organisations along the value chain that produce and market products (Coltrain, Barton & Boland, 2000). Coordination can be horizontal or vertical. Both are important for adding value to agricultural products across the value chain. Horizontal coordination occurs at the same point on the value chain whereas vertical coordination takes place at different levels. Effective leadership styles and attributes, especially those that support collaboration, are important for successful horizontal and vertical coordination and have been found to positively impact supply chain performance (Mehta, Dubinsky & Anderson, 2003).

Horizontal coordination

Horizontal coordination is when a company seeks to foster beneficial collaborations with other companies and individuals to address shared issues and exploit mutually beneficial opportunities (Kilelu, Klerkx & Leeuwis, 2017). In this instance collaboration can be defined as a purposeful relationship where involved parties cooperate to achieve shared goals (Rubin, 2009). In September 2021 Reefton Distilling Co. launched their Father's Day Limited Edition Little Biddy Gin - Classic X Swannдри, a collaboration with Swannдри bearing its signature red and black tartan.

Both the distillery and Swannдри are New Zealand brands known for their love for the great outdoors (Drinksbiz, 2021). These shared values reflect Reefton Distilling Co.'s principles, with Swannдри recognising that, "We've actually got a lot in common - a connection to the natural environment around us, a passion for enduring quality, and down-to-earth Kiwi ambition" (Swannдри, 2021). Collaborating with well-known New Zealand businesses that hold similar values to theirs shows how Reefton Distilling Co. are taking advantage of horizontal coordination opportunities that are likely to increase demand for their products whilst remaining committed to their core purpose and deeply held values.

Vertical coordination

Vertical coordination aims to better align value-adding activities within organisations at different levels across the value chain (Bijman, Muradian & Cechin, 2011). It relies on effective communication and knowledge sharing to increase efficiency within the value chain, therefore likely increasing the overall value of the final product (Bijman, Muradian & Cechin, 2011). Like many small distilleries, Reefton Distilling Co. are responsible for sourcing ingredients, processing, bottling and storing their spirits and liqueurs. To increase demand for their products they then work alongside other New Zealand distilleries to raise awareness of their brand in New Zealand and abroad. Patsy recognised that, "Watching the growth in the New Zealand distilling industry and how collaborative we are, early on we realised that if we work together and share skills and experience it will be good for all of us on the world stage" (Farmlands, 2021).

One organisation supporting the distillery and which Reefton Distilling Co. is a founding member of, is Distilled Spirits Aotearoa (NZ). This group promotes New Zealand-made distilled products and represents the joint interests of New Zealand distilled spirits makers (2018). They work to support distilleries to develop global branding and marketing strategies and support them in the final stages of the value chain (Distilled Spirits Aotearoa (NZ), 2018). Working alongside other distilleries and organisations dedicated to representing New Zealand distilleries increases Reefton Distilling Co.'s capacity to market their range of products to a global audience. This helps to ensure that their products are able to garner a price premium in both domestic and offshore markets.

Leading coordination

At Reefton Distilling Co. collaboration is an integral aspect of their business model, contributing to successful horizontal and vertical coordination. This leadership style reduces inter-organisational conflict, facilitates employee involvement, encourages innovation and supports a strongly held core purpose whilst focusing on the value of collaborative networks and deemphasising the roles typically held by leaders and followers (Archer & Cameron, 2009; Van Wart, 2013). Collaborative leaders are

those who achieve shared goals by taking responsibility for building and ensuring the operational success of the teams working alongside them (Rubin, 2009).

At Reefton Distilling Co. these characteristics can be seen in the close relationships formed with the wider Reefton community. Patsy speaks to how this has helped their business, "Whatever we need doing there always seems to be someone locally who can assist us" (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 79). Patsy and the team at the distillery are committed to expanding their business and facilitating relationships with the wider community as seen in the origins of the distillery, the number of shareholders in the community and the education and employment opportunities they offer. These decisions have helped to build the community's trust in Reefton Distilling Co. and Patsy as a leader solidifying the business as a core aspect of the town's economic prosperity.

Closely related to collaborative leadership is participative leadership, another leadership approach embodied by Patsy. This leadership style supports joint decision making, sharing influence between leaders and their employees and promotes collaboration (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998). The collaborative leadership attributes that Patsy embodies alongside her day-to-day involvement in all areas of the distillery and within the wider community show attributes associated with both participative and collaborative leadership.

4.6 Marketing Strategies

Underpinning successful approaches to marketing is the relationship between a company and its consumers. In the case of Reefton Distilling Co. their core purpose (and clearly communicating it to consumers) forms the basis of their marketing strategy. York Spencer, Reefton Distilling Co.'s General Brand Manager, articulated the distillery's approach to marketing as:

At the end of the day, you want to help a consumer become something or someone through your brand. ... To help you know, stimulate and motivate that emotion which makes you pay a premium for a brand or a product ... to enable a New Zealand Company to export internationally.

The end-consumer focus of Reefton Distilling Co.'s marketing strategy is a market-oriented approach to branding and marketing. Market orientation is an outside-in approach to marketing in which products are designed in response to consumer demands (Urde, Baumgarth & Merrilees, 2013). Market orientation has been proven to have positive impacts on consumer loyalty, product quality, innovation, and organisational performance (Kirca, Jayachandran & Bearden, 2005). Further, "Market orientation provides organisations with market sensing and customer linking capabilities" (Day, 1994).

Market sensing refers to the process for gathering, interpreting and using market information in systematic, thoughtful and anticipatory ways (Day, 1994). The points of difference between the distillery's domestic and international marketing strategies show how they are market-oriented and adapt their marketing and branding approaches to ensure that their products garner a price premium in both types of markets.

Marketing in New Zealand'

Reefton Distilling Co.'s approach to marketing in New Zealand is centred around their guiding principles and core purpose. They have had success in communicating these aspects of their business model through their website, social media platforms and extensive media opportunities. As discussed above, the distillery was founded as Patsy's way of contributing to the revitalisation of Reefton and in response to locals input about what unique aspects Reefton and its surroundings offered. She recognises that, "As well as creating jobs our aim has always been to create flow on economic benefits for Reefton and the West Coast community" (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 79).

Their recent expansion is another example of Reefton Distilling Co. being market oriented. Patsy recognises this, "With our expansion to a large modern production facility, we will be well positioned to meet the global demand for our products" (Graham, 2021). This larger facility will give the distillery the capacity to expand supply into new markets, produce new products, provide more jobs and attract more tourists to Reefton for tour and cellar door experiences (Farmlands, 2021).

Authenticity and effectively communicating authenticity to the end consumer is key to the success of Reefton Distilling Co.'s marketing strategy. This remains a challenging task however, York Spencer recognises that in the New Zealand market, communicating their brand story has been a valuable aspect of the distillery's marketing toolkit. He spoke to how it helps consumers form a connection with the brand:

I think a lot of people appeal to the back story which is that Little Biddy (Bridget Goodwin) travelled from Ireland and came to look for gold. So there's a little bit of rebel in all of us. And, that's where the brand positioning comes from, that there's a little bit of rebel in our DNA, all of us as Kiwis I think. And there's a bit of ingenuity and innovation and so I appeal to that story and I think a lot of people are appealing to that story. We've just got to tell it.

Reefton Distilling Co. has never been exclusively profit driven. Rather, they are driven by their core purpose, to revitalise the Reefton community and showcase the West Coast of New Zealand's wild natural environment.

Alongside their focus on the natural environment and showcasing the West Coast across their marketing platforms, the distillery has also worked with notable New Zealand brands, including Swannndri. The distillery worked with Swannndri to produce a Limited Edition Little Biddy Gin – Classic adorned with the signature Swannndri tartan in an effort to attract a wider range of New Zealand customers. The distillery describes their collaboration as, "Two Kiwi icons together for a limited time" (2021b).

Following their collaboration, Swannndri recognised the commonalities between them and Reefton Distilling Co. These include, "A connection to the natural environment around us, a passion for enduring quality, and down-to-earth Kiwi ambition" (Swannndri, 2021). These similarities are consistently drawn on in Reefton Distilling Co.'s marketing and are used to appeal to New Zealand audiences through media platforms and most importantly, word of mouth. Collaborations like these allow the distillery's products to reach a wider New Zealand-based audience who are likely to appeal to their community-focused core purpose.

York Spencer spoke to how the distillery's core purpose underpins their marketing strategies, "There's different levels of purpose, the founder's purpose [Patsy's] was to go back to her hometown ... and you know, most people would actually love to follow a person not so much a product. So ... you're buying into the pioneering spirit of the founder, and the brand ... but they're also buying into a family and what they stand for, which has been pioneering environmental stewardship and community".

York also recognises the importance of being purpose driven when developing modern market-oriented approaches to promote Reefton Distilling Co. He argues that the modern consumer is interested in the brand and people behind it as much as the product they are buying. On this point York stated, "They want to know that they are buying a brand which has got real people behind it. There's a sense of clear why". When considered alongside Reefton Distilling Co's adoption of human-centred design processes it can be clearly seen that although they are market focused they have always been driven by Patsy's commitment to seeing the Reefton township thrive.

Human-centred design is, "An approach to interactive systems development that aims to make systems usable and useful by focusing on the users, their needs and requirements, and by applying human factors, and usability knowledge and techniques" (ISO, 2019). This approach to design increases effectiveness, improves human wellbeing, user satisfaction, accessibility and likely sustainability and efficiency (ISO, 2019). There are seven principles of the human-centred design model: The design is centred around an understanding of the users and tasks; users are involved through the design and development process; the design is driven by user-centred evaluation; the process is cyclical; the design addresses the whole user experience; and, there is representation of a broad range of skills and perspectives (ISO, 2019; Townson, 2017). Human-centred design has allowed Reefton Distilling Co. to remain intimately connected to the Reefton community whilst producing a high quality product sold at a price premium in New Zealand.

Reefton Distilling Co.'s inclusion of the Reefton community throughout the development stages of the business, including the decisions around what the business should be and supporting locals to invest in the company, have meant that many local community members feel a sense of ownership towards the distillery with some even referring to it as "their distillery" (Andrew, 2021; Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, p. 1). Further, the business is committed to staying in Reefton rather than expanding their operations in a more centralised location. Patsy recognises that despite the additional costs and logistics required to operate from Reefton, "The vision behind the business is bigger than the bottom line" (Andrew, 2021). This connection to the Reefton community, environment and town history is a central feature of their marketing strategy, evidenced across Reefton Distilling Co's website, product designs and promotional videos, media articles and interviews.

Marketing Reefton Distilling Co. internationally

Reefton Distilling Co. are continuing to expand into international markets which requires consideration of how their marketing strategies are adapted when competing in international markets. This involves a different approach to marketing than that utilised in the New Zealand market. It is an approach that is centred around escaping into the New Zealand West Coast rainforest, the high quality of their products, and being a little "unexpected". The distillery is working to translate their brand story into marketing strategies that will garner a price premium in several overseas markets.

York Spencer recognised that this strategy is fluid and evolving as working across the supply chain to activate these strategies can be challenging, especially in international markets who may not relate to the distillery's core purpose as easily and New Zealand consumers. The Reefton Distilling Co. team continues to finetune this approach to marketing and branding to better support them as they expand into offshore markets. York spoke to their approach:

It has to be a combination ... They are buying a premium spirit because they want to relax at the end of the day and that connection to a purpose and a founder's vision is really important. But there are other fundamentals which are just as important for a consumer, the ingredients, the botanicals, feeling sophisticated, feeling like they are adventurous, feeling like they're knowledgeable people because they are buying this brand, and there's an emotional hook in this brand in terms of how it makes them feel. Those things have really got to play together.

'Made in New Zealand' marketing strategies support this approach and are used by the distillery to promote the high quality of the spirit to the consumer whilst inspiring them to try something "a little bit unexpected".

'Made in New Zealand' marketing messaging is used as a marketing strategy at Reefton Distilling Co. to appeal to international consumers. Global marketing needs complicate the abilities to achieve a price premium across international markets, unless the marketing strategies adopted consider foreign markets and export competitiveness (Sudarevic, Radojevic & Lekovic, 2015). 'Made in New Zealand' marketing is one tool utilised by Reefton Distilling Co. to add value to their brand by appealing to the "clean, green" image of New Zealand that is held by many in offshore markets. The imagery on their website and other advertising materials like their e-book depicts the natural environment and the native botanicals that make their products unique. This is supported by the language used across their branding. Phrases like "Crafters of untamed spirits", "Premium, hand crafted spirits, distilled from New Zealand's West Coast rainforest" and "Once famous for gold, the true value of this land has finally been discovered" (Reefton Distilling Co., 2021a; Reefton Distilling Co., 2021d, pp. v & vii). Patsy spoke to this, "It's about Reefton and the West Coast rainforest on a world stage ... it's all about branding New Zealand's provenance, the purity and the fresh water".

York Spencer also spoke about how the 'Made in New Zealand' approach to branding introduces a sense of escapism into their brand which is used for, "Inspiring you [the consumer] to go forth ... to be a better version of yourself. ... We're inspiring you to ignite that little bit of rebellion, to be a little bit unexpected". When asked about fostering this sense of escapism York recognised that, "Everyone wants to escape the pressures of daily life so we try and package that into a positioning around a brand that allows you to express or feel a little bit rebellious ... You're escaping, you're drinking a piece of New Zealand, it's pure, natural and premium. You've got the escapism into the New Zealand West Coast rainforest. And you're sipping a pure spirit (or liqueur) which is made from botanicals in the deep dark depths of the southern hemisphere".

Drawing on the remoteness of Reefton and unexpected origins of the botanicals used in their high quality products works well alongside the stories of Bridget 'Biddy' Goodwin and George Fairweather Moonlight as told on their product. It also consolidates the 'Made in New Zealand' branding approach which appeals to consumers in international markets. Together, these aspects of their branding and

marketing strategies embody the wild, natural aspects of New Zealand that appeal to offshore markets, add value to their products and allow them to achieve a price premium.

4.6 The Power of a 'Calling': A Final Thought

The term 'calling' refers to a type of work that, to paraphrase the poet David Whyte, is good for you and good for the world at the same time. The theologian Frederick Buechner (2006, p.4) captured these two aspects of calling nicely when he suggested that "the vocation for you is the one in which your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet". A sense of calling is another characteristic that can contribute to effective leadership and support businesses in garnering a price premium.

It is clear that Patsy Bass' leadership is underpinned by a sense of calling. She has a clear and deeply authentic desire to contribute to the revitalisation of Reefton. At the same time, living, working and contributing within the Reefton community gives her a powerful sense of personal satisfaction. When discussing her return she observed that:

Reefton always just felt like home. It's been in my DNA my whole life ... It's like a comfortable slipper ... We [moved here] and everything holds a memory. The community is fantastic. It's really warm. They all work hard and they help each other. ... There's something special about it ... There's a real energy now.

Clearly her connection to Reefton, combined with her passion for seeing her hometown revitalised has instilled a sense of "calling" which led to the foundation of Reefton Distilling Co. and drives her leadership.

Kim Cameron (2008, p. 70) argues that a sense of calling is a powerful foundation for highly effective leadership.

The more that people define their work as a calling and have conviction that what they are doing is good and right, the more meaningful the work. High levels of meaningfulness in work have been found to be associated with positive outcomes and extraordinary individual and organisational performance.

Patsy's 'calling' to return to Reefton and contribute to its revitalisation inspired the foundation of Reefton Distilling Co. and continues to underpin its business success. The high quality of their products, ongoing innovation, collaboration efforts, marketing strategies, close knit team and intimate relationships with the wider Reefton community, all evidence the ways in which Reefton Distilling Co. embodies Patsy's calling, to revitalise the Reefton community and showcase all that its surrounding natural environment has to offer.

Patsy's approach to leadership and the distillery's business success so far is intimately linked to her 'calling' and is evidenced in all aspects of their business model. This suggests that a sense of calling can be an important foundation of the type of leadership that can support New Zealand agri-food producers in emphasising physical, credence and cultural attributes to achieve a price premium.

As discussed above, Patsy emphasises the importance of authenticity in the story and products of Reefton Distillery Co. "Everything had to be premium. But we wanted it to be authentic ... The brand

story, it's real. Everything about it is real. There are so many stories here and they are all real stories". The authenticity of these stories parallels the depth and integrity of Patsy's personal leadership story. Without her story and the sense of calling on which it rests it is likely that the "brand story" on which Reefton Distillery Co. is founded would feel less authentic and less meaningful.

Patsy's clear sense of calling echoes our experiences with the leaders in the case studies that precede this one. Here we find good news and not so good news for organisations wanting to emphasise physical, credence and cultural attributes and obtain additional value for their agri-food products. The good news is that passionate leaders with a genuine sense of calling can achieve extraordinary success in creating and exporting high value New Zealand agri-food products. The not so good news is that the attributes that underpin these successes cannot be faked. They have to be authentic to the core. They have to be authentic in that they reflect the deep purpose and principles of the organisation. More significantly they have to be authentic in that they manifest the motivations of leaders who have a deep and heartfelt sense of commitment that goes way beyond profit and career advancement. These are the products of personal leadership journey's that take place over years. They speak to leadership qualities that cannot be obtained through formal training or developed through workshops. They suggest that there may be unique challenges in developing leaders in sufficient numbers to seize, what Mike Barton, in an earlier case, described as "a once in a lifetime chance" to transform New Zealand's agri-food economy.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Patsy Bass returned to Reefton in 2018 with a desire to give back to the community that has given her so much. This focus on revitalising the Reefton township underpins all aspects of Reefton Distilling Co.'s business model. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for their products has skyrocketed and has seen the distillery successfully increase their capital and expand into a new larger production facility. Despite their recent growth, the distillery has remained true to its core purpose. This is exhibited by their focus on providing jobs, education and upskilling opportunities to the Reefton community, allocating shares of the business to be locally owned and attracting tourism to the town.

Their success is in part due to the value-adding approaches adopted by Reefton Distilling Co. Innovation and coordination are important value-adding elements that have been drawn on by the distillery to produce high quality spirits and liqueurs that showcase Reefton's history and its surrounding environment and garner a premium price on New Zealand and international markets. The value of their products is communicated to consumers through effective marketing strategies that have put not just the distillery but the wider Reefton community on the map, as indicated by the increase in economic prosperity across the area.

Effective leadership has been instrumental to the success of the distillery and, as found in the literature review, is closely connected to successful innovation, coordination and marketing. Patsy Bass provides an example of how effective leadership can positively contribute to value-adding processes. Her approach to leadership at Reefton Distilling Co. reflects the attributes discussed in the earlier literature review. Patsy and her team centre the distillery's core purpose, deeply held values and differentiation strategy in all the decisions made around their range of products and how they are developed. Their commitment to the revitalisation of Reefton sets them apart from their competitors and, under Patsy's leadership, has seen them grow exponentially since their foundation. This approach has proven successful thus far and when combined with their ongoing work to develop high quality products showcasing native botanicals and locally sourced spring water sources it is evident why Reefton Distilling Co. have succeeded in garnering a price premium for their products in both New Zealand and abroad.

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