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Empowering Leadership: Building Tenure, Not Turnover

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By Kate Massey, General Manager, APAC, Searchspring and Intelligent Reach (Athos Companies)

As the General Manager of APAC at Searchspring and Intelligent Reach (Athos Companies), I've always believed that leadership isn't about titles—it's about impact. For me, leadership is about fostering a strong company culture, building authentic connections, and supporting my team in becoming leaders in their own right. As International Women's Day sparks conversations about leadership and empowerment, I see it as a reminder that true leadership is about creating an environment where everyone can thrive long-term.

Growth Through Tenure, Not Turnover

When I first joined Searchspring, I was the company's first boots on the ground in APAC. Fast forward four years, and our team has grown to 22. However, growth isn't just about headcount. It's about ensuring my team has clear direction, continuous learning opportunities, and a rewarding, supportive environment.

When you're in the right place, you don't need to jump ship to get ahead. The value of tenure lies in helping you master your domain. In a fast-growth environment like ours, there will always be opportunities to stretch and grow.

As our team and operations have expanded (both organically and through acquisition) we've embraced change with adaptability and resilience. From launching a record number of projects ahead of the Black Friday / Cyber Monday peak period in 2024 to managing larger accounts, deepening partnerships, and integrating new technology, the team and I are constantly reaching new career milestones.

As we keep growing and onboarding new people, those with longer tenure are leading from the front. They mentor, support, and guide—without always needing a title to validate it. No matter how busy people are, they always make time to help their colleagues. Ultimately, we're very focused on winning together.

Through every transition, I've placed a strong emphasis on turning individual contributors into leaders within their own domains. My goal is to show that career growth doesn't have to mean leaving—it can mean levelling up.

Leading with a Customer Lens

My leadership philosophy also involves providing clarity, encouraging ownership, and enabling team members to take initiative. Leadership isn't about waiting for a title. It's about stepping up, taking ownership, and leading from the front.

That mindset also extends to our customers. It's important to instill an approach of taking the lead in how we care for our customers. The customer is at the centre of everything we do, whether that's solving a challenge for them, helping them gain more value from our solutions, and even where we invest and how we grow our operations. Everyone can lead by building relationships that aren't just about the tech we provide, but truly about being there for our customers.

This approach has been particularly evident throughout Searchspring's navigation of two significant acquisitions in a relatively short time. The incredible outcomes we've seen by bringing teams together through clear direction and a shared, customer-focused vision has solidified my belief leadership is about influence and action rather than hierarchy.

Culture that Continues Growth

With a focus on tenure consistency, ongoing growth opportunities, and a customer-first mindset, I'm proud to have helped build a strong workplace culture. However, culture isn't just about work—it extends into our personal lives as well. Several team members have achieved significant personal milestones while at Searchspring. While some have bought their first homes, others have returned from parental leave with full support of the team.

For me, a truly supportive culture isn't just about celebrating the professional wins together, but also the personal milestones. It's about recognising that life doesn't stop outside of work. What we've built together is an environment where people feel secure in building their careers while balancing personal responsibilities.

Authenticity is another key ingredient in our culture. It's not about being corporate or by-the-book, but being real in how we work together, especially as we navigate growth.

At a time when many companies struggle with retention, I strongly believe that tenure-focused growth works. By investing in people, looking through a customer lens, and fostering an authentic, supportive culture where everyone can extend themselves beyond their titles, we're not only driving success—we're building the next generation of leaders.

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