

'The Part-Time Executive': NZ's Fractional Leadership Talent Pool Grows 13x in Two Years

Now more than ever, businesses are looking for new ways to bring in fresh leadership without the overhead and full-time commitment; and Fractional is the answer

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Michelle Allbon, CEO and Co-Founder of The Fractional Directory

Fractional Leadership market is booming, with a staggering 13x growth in the number of individuals publicly listing themselves as Fractional Leaders between 2023 and 2025, according to the latest report from The Fractional Directory. Once considered a niche concept, Fractional Leadership is now becoming a viable alternative to Big Consulting and traditional full-time executive roles, offering businesses access to senior-level expertise on a part-time basis.

The report reveals that the number of Fractional Leaders in New Zealand has grown from 43 individuals in 2023 to over 525 in 2025, with thousands more working across the

broader Asia-Pacific. This rapid expansion reflects a global shift in workforce structure, as experienced leaders and exited founders opt-out of returning to traditional employment, and instead are embracing a “portfolio career” approach that juggles multiple clients and income streams.

“Forward-thinking leaders are rewriting the rules of work. Instead of returning to full-time jobs, they’re choosing flexibility, impact, and autonomy— helping businesses see real results without the overhead of a permanent hire.”

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The report highlights that in New Zealand, Fractional Leaders are most commonly engaged by Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), but their expertise spans every stage of business, from early-stage startups to corporate enterprises. Marketing, Technology, and Executive Leadership are the most in-demand areas of expertise, with an average day rate hovering around \$1,200

NZD.

However, despite the growing talent pool, many Kiwi and Australian companies still struggle to understand what Fractional Leadership entails. Unlike consultants or advisors, Fractional Leaders take on strategic leadership roles with direct accountability for outcomes, and embed themselves into businesses for long-term impact and more measurable productivity.

In addition, Fractional Leadership doesn't operate in a single line of business — it applies to every domain, including specific facets of technology such as AI, which is clear by the emergence of Fractional Chief AI Officers (F/CAIOs). This newly emerging executive role helps companies integrate AI into their core business model, particularly in industries like financial services, technology, and healthcare.

For businesses across Australia and New Zealand, this presents a significant opportunity. In an environment where skilled senior level labor can be scarce and competition is fierce, fractional leaders can provide critical strategic guidance, drive innovation, and fill key leadership gaps without the burdens of long-term contracts and fixed salaries.

“Companies that embrace this trend will gain a competitive advantage,” Allbon adds. “They will access specialized expertise, increase agility, and optimize their cost structures. Those who cling to outdated employment models risk being left behind in a rapidly evolving market, as they hold onto unnecessary overhead.”

The full State of Fractional 2025 report is available at <https://www.fractional.co.nz/report>

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