

## Definition

Ikigai is a Japanese concept that means "a reason for being." It is the intersection of what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs, and what you can be paid for. In leadership, it translates to aligning one's professional role with personal passion, skills, societal needs, and economic viability. This alignment fosters purpose-driven action and intrinsic motivation.

## Importance to a Young Leader

For young leaders, finding their Ikigai is crucial as it integrates personal fulfillment with professional efficacy. It drives leaders to engage in work that not only advances their careers but also contributes to their personal growth and social impact. Embracing Ikigai encourages a holistic view of success that balances internal satisfaction with external achievement.

## 7 Vital Micro Practices

1. **Passion Exploration:** Identify activities that fulfill you and relate them to your professional endeavors.
2. **Skills Matching:** Assess your professional skills and how they can be applied to what you love doing.
3. **Needs Assessment:** Consider the needs of the world and how your work could address them.
4. **Economic Alignment:** Find ways to align your passion and skills with economic opportunities.
5. **Reflection and Adjustment:** Reflect on and adjust your professional path to stay aligned with your Ikigai.
6. **Continual Learning:** Pursue ongoing education and skill development in areas of passion and societal need.
7. **Purposeful Networking:** Build a network that supports and reflects your Ikigai.

## ✔ 7 Right Behaviours

1. **Proactive Engagement:** Seek out roles and projects that resonate with your Ikigai.
2. **Purpose-Driven Work:** Prioritize work that feels meaningful and aligns with your personal values and societal contribution.
3. **Strategic Volunteering:** Choose volunteer opportunities that build skills and meet community needs relevant to your Ikigai.
4. **Balanced Decision-Making:** Make decisions that consider personal well-being, professional growth, societal impact, and financial needs.
5. **Authenticity in Leadership:** Lead with authenticity, ensuring your actions reflect your core values and Ikigai.
6. **Ikigai Advocacy:** Encourage others to find their intersection of passion, skill, need, and reward.
7. **Resilience in Pursuit:** Persistently pursue the fulfillment of your Ikigai despite challenges or setbacks.

## ✔ 7 Right Attitudes and Mindsets

1. **Passion-First Approach:** Emphasize passion and purpose in your professional journey.
2. **Openness to Exploration:** Stay open to exploring new avenues that align with your Ikigai.
3. **Service Orientation:** Orient your professional goals around service to others.
4. **Integrated Success View:** Measure success not just by career advancement but by personal and societal fulfillment.
5. **Adaptability:** Remain flexible in how you pursue your Ikigai as opportunities and personal circumstances evolve.
6. **Lifelong Curiosity:** Maintain a deep-seated curiosity and willingness to grow in areas related to your Ikigai.
7. **Integrative Life-Work Balance:** Strive for a balance that integrates work with other aspects of life's passion.

## ✘ 7 Wrong Behaviours

1. **Neglecting Passion:** Ignoring your interests and what you love in favor of exclusively pragmatic choices.
2. **Skills Disregard:** Failing to utilize or develop your skills fully.
3. **Overlooking Societal Contributions:** Overlooking the broader impact your work could have on society.
4. **Financial Myopia:** Focusing solely on financial gain at the expense of passion, skill, and societal need.
5. **Rigidity to Change:** Resisting changes that may lead closer to realizing your Ikigai.
6. **Isolation in Professional Growth:** Failing to seek mentorship or community connections that align with your Ikigai.
7. **Purposeless Work:** Engaging in work that lacks a sense of personal and societal purpose.

## ✘ 7 Wrong Attitudes and Mindsets

1. **Monetary Fixation:** Placing money above all other aspects of your work, neglecting the comprehensive approach of Ikigai.
2. **Cynicism about Passion:** Being cynical about the role of passion and purpose in the workplace.
3. **Short-Term Wins over Long-Term Fulfillment:** Prioritizing immediate success over long-term fulfillment.
4. **Dismissal of Personal Growth:** Undervaluing personal development in the pursuit of professional goals.
5. **Inflexibility to New Paths:** Not being open to shifts in career paths that could lead to a stronger realization of Ikigai.
6. **Overemphasis on Individual Achievement:** Valuing individual achievements over contributions to the well-being of the team and society.
7. **Work-Life Separation:** Treating work as separate from personal passions and societal contributions, missing out on the holistic integration that Ikigai promotes.

## In Practice

Imagine a young leader at an environmental non-profit who discovers her Ikigai in promoting sustainable living. She translates this passion into her leadership role by initiating projects that align with her values, such as a community recycling program or a green tech innovation challenge. She advocates for these projects with genuine enthusiasm, which is infectious and galvanizes her team.

By operationalizing her Ikigai, she not only achieves organizational objectives but does so in a way that is deeply rewarding both to her and her team. Her leadership becomes a beacon for others who seek to find purpose in their work, demonstrating that when leaders align their professional endeavors with their Ikigai, they can achieve extraordinary results and personal satisfaction.

## Reflect by Answering the Below Question:

Develop your own IKIGAI Chart by answering:

1. What are you good at?
2. What do you love?
3. What can you get paid for?
4. What does the world need?