

# Wide Shareholder Base by Design

*Why concentration feels efficient and why it often creates fragility*

There's a strong instinct in business to keep ownership tight. Fewer people. Cleaner decisions. Less complexity. On the surface, it makes sense. But over time, highly concentrated ownership tends to create fragile systems, especially in professional services, where value is carried by people, not assets.

As of January 2026, 72 people owned Broadleaf shares, with roughly half working within Broadleaf or our community of partner businesses. That's not a side effect. It's a design choice.

## THE DESIGN PRINCIPLE

**Fast money can build impressive things quickly. Patient money builds things that last. A wide shareholder base makes value extraction harder, and that's exactly why we like it. It keeps the focus on quality, continuity, people, and the long view.**

Concentrated Ownership	Wide Shareholder Base
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Small number of outcomes matter most</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Risk is shared, perspectives widen</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Time horizons compress toward a single event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Long-term thinking becomes easier and more natural</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Decisions optimised for capital, not community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Balance of interests: clients, team, owners, future leaders</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Disagreement goes underground and power intensifies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Transparency and articulation of decisions improves</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fragility when one key decision-maker is affected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– System bends rather than breaks when conditions change</li> </ul>

## Shared Ownership Creates Shared Responsibility

One of the most powerful things we've seen is what happens when people inside businesses also become owners of the broader system they're part of.

- The work stops being abstract
- Decisions feel personal, in the right way
- Stewardship replaces entitlement
- Short-term wins are weighed against long-term consequences

Clients don't experience a brand. They experience people. And people behave differently when they feel genuinely invested.

## The Internal Market Matters

A wide shareholder base creates something practical and often overlooked: an internal market for ownership.

- Creates pathways for next-generation leaders
- Provides liquidity without forcing exits
- Reduces 'all or nothing' succession outcomes
- Keeps ownership closer to the work

Ownership doesn't have to be something people leave to access. It can be something they grow into. That's a very different proposition from most models in the market.

We're not trying to minimise voices. Wider ownership forces something healthier: transparency, better articulation of decisions, and respect for differing time horizons. It doesn't eliminate complexity, it distributes it.

*"At its core, this comes back to a simple question: is this system designed to extract value or to steward it? A wide shareholder base makes extraction harder. And that's exactly why we like it. It keeps the focus where it belongs, on quality, continuity, people, and the long view."*