ADEPTION™

How mindset development impacts self–awareness.

ADEPTION INSIGHTS SERIES

Unpacking insights and themes from the real life experiences, challenges, goals and reflections of thousands of leaders — to support better leadership development journeys.

How mindset development impacts self-awareness

This insights series report explores **the relationship between a leader's vertical mindset stage and their level of self-awareness.** Adeption analyzed data from a sample of 81 leaders who completed both our Vertical Mindset Indicator (VMI) sentence stems and an Adeption 36O assessment at the beginning of a leadership development program.

Leaders were split into two groups based on their VMI scores: Early Stage leaders (those with scores in the 'Expert' and early 'Achieving' mindset stages), and Late Stage leaders (scores in later 'Achieving' and 'Redefining' mindset stages). We then analyzed differences between the two groups in how their colleagues rated their leadership across 5 competency groups in the Adeption 36O.

Learn more
About **this research**, vertical development **mindset stages**, the **VMI assessment** and **Adeption 36O** assessment in the Appendix

ADEPTION INSIGHTS

We found <u>four key insights</u> that highlight the importance of integrating mindset development in leadership development programs. This insights series report explores in detail one of these key insights.
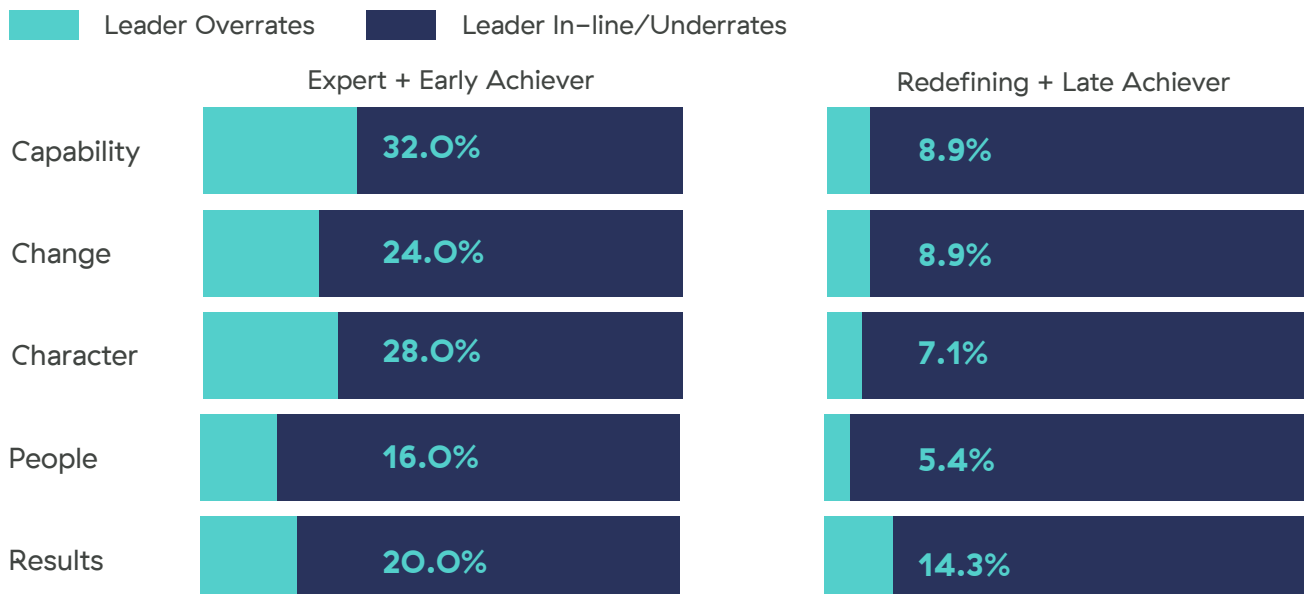
KEY INSIGHT:
Leaders operating from later mindset stages are less likely to overrate their own leadership competencies, and have greater self-awareness around how they are perceived.

We discovered that overall, the majority of leaders in the sample did not overrate their leadership skills relative to how they were rated by others. However, in several competency groups, Early Stage leaders were more likely to overrate themselves than their Later Stage counterparts.

This isn't to say that earlier stage leaders are more likely to be overly optimistic in their ratings. It does imply that overall, Later Stage leaders are more in tune with how they are perceived and/or where the shadows of their leadership lie.

Proportions of leaders who rated themselves higher than their colleagues did (overrated) in each Competency Group, split by Vertical Development stages

■ Leader Overrates   ■ Leader In-line/Underrates

	Expert + Early Achiever	Redefining + Late Achiever
Capability	32.0%	8.9%
Change	24.0%	8.9%
Character	28.0%	7.1%
People	16.0%	5.4%
Results	20.0%	14.3%

> **Research shows only about 15% of people are sufficiently self-aware and that there is less than a 30% correlation between people's actual and self-perceived competence.**
> Harvard Business Publishing, Craig Dickerson

WHY SELF-AWARENESS MATTERS

Self-awareness is a cornerstone of effective leadership. It empowers leaders to leverage their strengths, identify opportunities for growth, and continuously serve others better. Research highlights that leaders who cultivate self-awareness make more informed decisions, collaborate effectively, and more easily manage conflicts. By focusing on strengths and recognizing blind spots, leaders can act with greater conviction, authenticity, and social competence.

Cultivating self-awareness enhances emotional intelligence, which is crucial for successful leadership. A leader's awareness of where they focus their time and energy can help reduce stress and boost their ability to stay focused. Confidence is key in leadership, and nearly one in ten leaders identify it as their biggest challenge. Self-awareness provides the clarity needed to understand and harness internal dialogue, offering leaders the choice to consciously shape how they think, feel, and act in any given moment.

IN ACTION

Below are thematic reflections from leaders and our coaches about applying deep self-inquiry.

SELF DIALOGUE

Leaders find that being more self-aware of moments when they slip into critical thinking or behavior enables them to **shift to thinking and acting 'above the line' more quickly**. Approaching situations with a more positive mindset can profoundly impact leaders and the outcomes they experience over time.

CONFIDENCE

Through being conscious of low confidence moments or identifying areas where they need support, leaders learn that **understanding how they project confidence** — through body language, communication, and more — enables them to pause and reset more easily.

PRESENCE

Realizing the impact of their mood and actions on others — **how they 'show up' and maintain composure, especially under pressure** — is often a breakthrough moment for leaders. One actionable idea is to schedule self-check-ins before and after important interactions.

TOOL

Leadership is a verb:
Explore a framework illustrating the relationship between skills development and self-awareness.
Read More

> **Great leadership isn't about getting everything right, all of the time. It's about making informed choices to serve yourself and others better. Ultimately, increasing inner awareness affects outward behavior. You can get information in many ways but it is what you do with that information, and the decisions that you make, that dictate your pathway.**

APPENDIX

EXPLORE THE FULL RESEARCH REPORT

Download the full research report

We analyzed a sample of 81 leaders from one organization over a two-year period who completed both VMI stems and an Adeption 360 assessment at the beginning of a leadership development program. This data enabled us to assess their vertical mindset stages, and captured how their colleagues rated their leadership competencies before they started the program. With all leaders in the sample coming from a single organization within a short time period, this helps to control for factors that may otherwise affect results, given these leaders were all working within a similar context and period of the organization's history. Leaders were split into two groups based on their VMI scores: Early Stage leaders (comprising those with scores in Expert and early Achieving, n = 25), and Late Stage leaders (scores in later Achieving and Redefining, n = 56). The resulting research provides a unique view of the overlap between vertical mindset stage and leadership performance.

HOW WE MEASURE MINDSET

The Vertical Mindset Indicator (VMI) assessment builds on the work of Susanne Cook-Greuter, a world authority on leadership maturity. It analyzes a leader's responses to sentence stems, using AI scoring to identify their vertical mindset stage and range. The supporting report and debrief look at how the leader's mindset characteristics may be affecting their leadership effectiveness and suggests opportunities for development.

VERTICAL MINDSET STAGES

Opportunist: Wins any way possible. Self-oriented.	**Diplomat:** Upholds rules and norms of the organization.	**Expert:** Motivated to gain mastery and expertise. Values logic and respects other experts.	**Achiever:** Driven by goals, achievement and meeting the standards they have set.
Redefining: Inspired by meaning & purpose. Challenges the status quo to find new ways.	**Transforming:** Generate organizational personal transformations. Sees the system.	**Alchemical:** Brings together disparate elements to transform beyond the previously known	**TOOL** Vertical Development and Mindset Stages. Read More

MORE ABOUT THE ADEPTION 360 ASSESSMENT

The Adeption 360 assessment gives leaders a panoramic view of how others they work with view their capabilities and approach. It brings together diverse feedback from stakeholders—their manager, direct reports, peers, and others—providing rich insights when viewed in conjunction with self assessment. Adeption 360 focuses on 5 core competencies – Character, Capability, Results, People, Change – to highlight top strengths, hidden strengths, and key development opportunities: at an individual, team or organizational level.

LEADER REFELCTIONS

Actions Taken: Actions set were sampled from 17 programs undertaken with 17 organizations. Sub-sampling was used to prevent large programs from being over-represented in the sample, so no organization represents more than 14.3% of the sample. This sample is not intended to be a representative demographic of leaders. Since actions were set in response to specific prompts, these were sub-categorized if there was a leading component in the prompt (e.g. My action: In the next two weeks I will do this in order to get the best out of my people...). The sub-categories were "Others" (where actions were being prompted towards what they'll do with their teams/direct reports, "Myself" (where actions were being prompted towards internal reflection and development, and "Organization" (where actions were prompted towards organizational goals). Actions were allowed to have up to 2 theme tags each. This report looks thematically at actions taken in the 'Practice Self-Awareness and Composure' theme.

ABOUT ADEPTION

How Adeption can help you grow agile leaders for the future of work.

ASSESSMENTS

A scalable solution for individual or team growth as a one-time development boost or regular pulse-check.

WORKSHOPS

Designed to enable behavioral shift through iterative action and experimentation in the "flow of work" while fostering collective leadership intelligence.

PLATFORM

The digital platform uses AI to scale development and support pull-based learning. A coach on-demand, leaders access tools, insights and support at their point of need.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Using our B3 methodology across all touchpoints, programs are designed to grow agile leaders within a supportive development ecosystem.

FREE DEMO

TALK TO US