



Mindset growth through leadership development.

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.



One of the biggest challenges leadership development practitioners face is proving the tangible impact of development initiatives. This is particularly difficult when it comes to areas like mindset growth. For individuals, moving through the stages of adult development is a gradual process (often taking years), and growth has traditionally been difficult to measure.

In an effort to close this gap, we've analyzed the pre- and post-program mindset stages of hundreds of leaders using the Vertical Mindset Indicator. Our findings in this report offer insights that may impact the future of leadership development practices.

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

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	

ADEPTION INSIGHTS

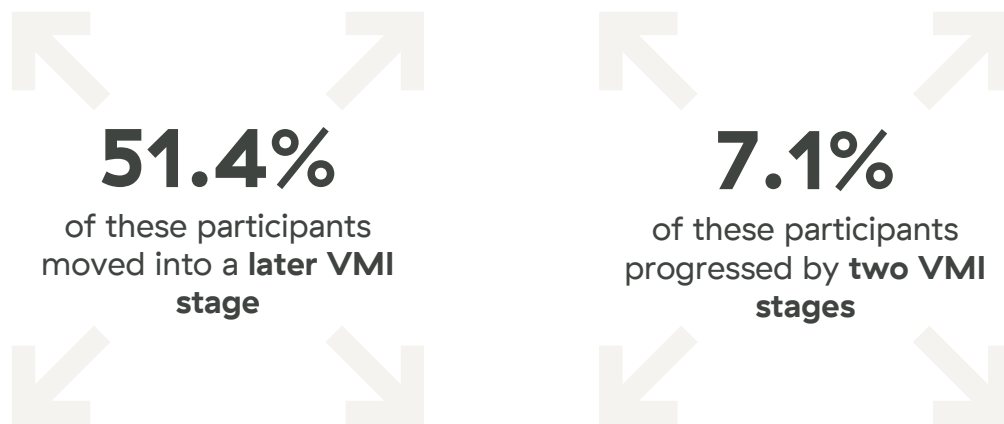
SHIFT IN MINDSET BEFORE - AFTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - TOTAL SAMPLE



Looking at the shift in mindset for the total sample revealed mindset growth in around one-fifth of leaders over the duration of a program informed by vertical development methodology:

- **21.5% of participants** shifted their scores to move to a later (higher) VMI stage.
- **2.9% of participants** expanded their range by not just one, but two VMI stages.

SHIFT IN MINDSET BEFORE – AFTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – SUB GROUP



Sub Group: Leaders who were in one of the Vertical Mindset Stages – Achiever, Expert, or Diplomat in the VMI assessment conducted before the leadership development program commenced

We also looked at a sub-group of participants who initially tended to the Diplomat, Expert, and Achiever mindsets. The growth for this group was even more pronounced:

- **51.4% of these participants** moved into a later (higher) VMI stage.
- **7.1% of these participants** progressed by two VMI stages.

Taken together, these results demonstrate that **completing a leadership development program grounded in vertical development can be a promoter of mindset growth** in around nine months (a typical program duration). This contrasts to the years it can take individuals to move through stages of adult development. Having a sample group of the size used in this analysis is significant and the findings an advancement in the vertical development field.

WHY MINDSET MATTERS

“ The future of work needs agile leaders who have a growth mindset

Gary Bolles, Internationally-recognized expert on the future of work and the future of learning Chair, Future of Work, Singularity University

Despite what the term 'vertical development' might suggest, assessing at later (higher) mindset stages isn't always 'better'. Different situations and contexts call for different approaches to influencing, communication, and collaboration. Leaders who can operate from an expanded range of mindset stages, tend to be more agile in how they understand, empathize, and skillfully respond to others with differing perspectives, and to a range of challenges and opportunities.

We've found that leaders starting a development experience are most commonly at an Achiever or Redefining mindset stage. For the leaders not yet at Redefining, the impact of unlocking this mindset stage is significant, meaning that they can better navigate both technical and adaptive challenges.



IN ACTION

PROVING IMPACT

Being able to demonstrate the impact of leadership development programs is vital, especially in today's economically scrutinized environment. Using the VMI assessment before and after a vertical development initiative provides a simple and novel way to quantify individual growth and prove organizational return on investment.

SUPPORTING ACTION LEARNING

We see this data set and insights as a springboard for opportunities to enhance the on-the-job actions leaders take as part of development initiatives. We are actively exploring what may produce higher changes in VMI scores, without prescribing competencies or actions. This may include how we frame and support action planning in workshops and on the Adepton platform, while respecting a leader's individual challenges and context.

These insights into mindset growth and the integration of vertical development theory into practice have us excited for the future of leadership development. We hope this report has provided inspiration to propel your organization's leadership development initiatives forward.

TOOL

Vertical Mindset Indicator (VMI)

[Find Out More](#) 

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Adepton has delivered leadership development experiences to thousands of leaders over 10+ years, empowering them to 'learn how to learn' and drive their own continuous development forward.

VMI sentence stems were integrated at the start and the end of each development experience included in this analysis. We looked at the results of these assessments from 674 people on 3 separate programs who had completed VMI stems at the beginning and end of their programs. Of these, there were 282 who tested below Redefining at the beginning of the program. The data has high validity — participants were not aware that these questions related to the vertical mindset stage in the Adepton experience, so this removes any potential bias in the way the questions were answered. VMI scoring is also carried out by AI so this mitigates Individual scoring bias in the processing of results.

A note about how we use AI

We're committed to AI in service of leaders and the organizations we work with. We use it in a responsible, ethical and fair way to benefit our users and in the service of humanity flourishing — not working against it. Adepton uses AI to score assessments, recommend tools to users, share leader insights, and automate reporting. It enables coaches to easily work with more participants, and leaders to have a coach in their pocket.

Protecting the privacy and security of data is paramount. Data at the level of individuals does not leave Adepton, and we take all practical steps to ensure the security of the data we hold on behalf of our clients and participants. [Find out more: How we secure and protect information](#)



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.

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