



## Strengthening the Action–Reflection link for leadership growth.

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.

# Strengthening the Action–Reflection link for leadership growth



This insight series report analyzes how real leaders have set and reflected on actions they take to overcome current challenges, on the Adepton platform. This analysis of 1546 actions by 381 leaders during various leadership development programs, aims to highlight ways to elevate action–based development.

Inspired by the SMART framework for goal setting, we scored leader actions by how specific they were, on three key dimensions:

- What: Action description and approach
- Why: Purpose and envisioned outcome
- When: Timing, or frequency

Our analysis then cross referenced these scores with leaders' reflection rates – whether or not they reentered the platform and reflected on their learnings after taking the action on–the–job.

## ACTION – REFLECTION

Great action planning and regular reflection are practices that set leaders up for success. Leadership is an active practice, on–the–job scenarios are where the best practice and feedback occurs. To effect behavioral change, three reinforcement types are needed with 70% of learning driven through on–the–job action (see Figure 1). This highlights the importance of helping leaders undertake actions based on their real world context.



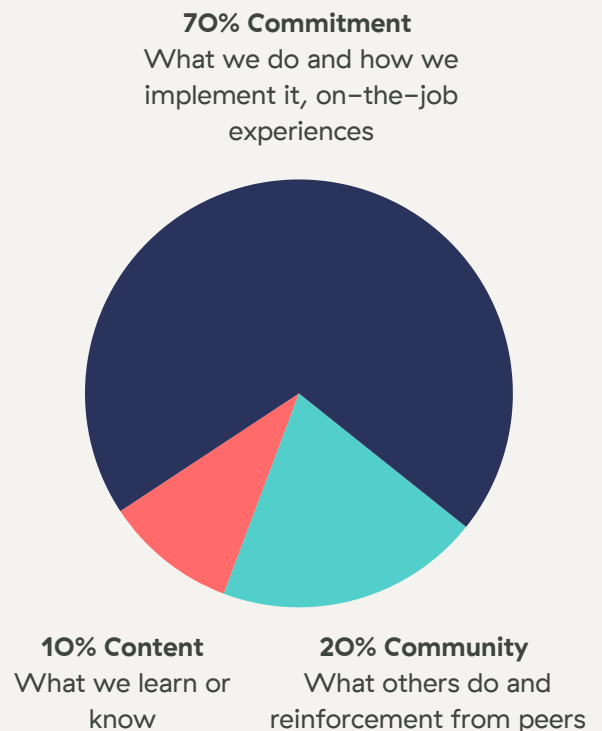
**Research shows that 15 minutes of reflection daily can increase productivity by up to 23%\*.**

Reflection is a core component of Adepton's Be Conscious, Be Curious, Be Better (B3) methodology, helping leaders to contextualize, focus on what they need, bring their insights to life and deepen learning.

Whether devising personal development actions or coaching others with goal setting, improving how actions are planned and increasing reflection rates is more likely to lead to growth and behavior change. These are no cost practices that can help people at all levels in organizations navigate complexity and continuously develop through everyday work experiences.

\*Source: [Learning by Thinking: How Reflection Can Spur Progress Along the Learning Curve](#)

### Reinforcement types for behavior change



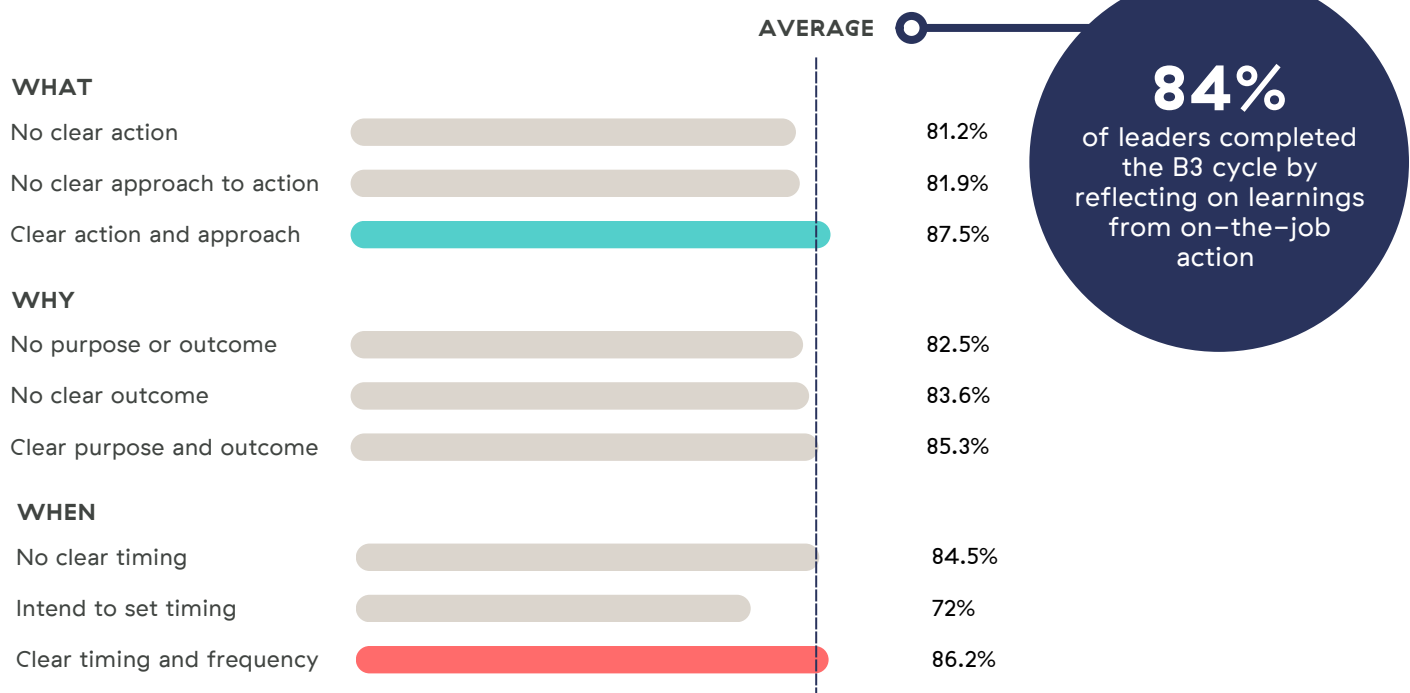
**Figure 1:** Prof Art Kohn ATD Global 2016 and adapted from Morgan McCall and colleagues at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) 70:20:10. Benchmarked to COM–B behaviour change model

## ADEPTION INSIGHTS

The overall reflection rate of this sample\* stood at 84%, remaining consistent across most dimension scores, with two exceptions that were statistically significant; we explore these further below.

### ACTION SCORING SCALE

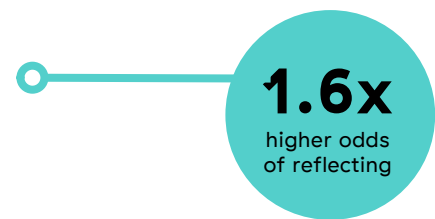
### REFLECTION RATES



When an action is clearly defined, the reflection rate increased to 87.5%. Further statistical modelling showed that the odds of reflecting were 1.6 times higher when leaders specified a clear action and approach compared to leaders who did not have a clear action.

#### Example actions

“I will communicate the new strategy openly” **VS.** “I will present the new strategy to my team in an interactive session. I’ll break it into 3 sections and ensure there is time for structured discussion.”



When leaders specified exactly when they would complete an action, their odds of reflecting were 2.4x higher than when they only referenced an intention to set a time to do so. The actions that only referenced an intention to set a time, often mentioned the need to coordinate a time with other people.

#### Example actions

“I will see if there is a time that suits everyone for a catch up to discuss the new strategy” **VS.** “I’ll introduce the strategy at our next monthly meeting. Schedule two follow up sessions for Q&A and record all sessions so people can watch if they cannot attend in person.”



\*Overall reflection rate is not indicative of a population wide sample of action reflections on the Adepton platform. This analysis specifically excluded a data set where the reflection rate was 100% due to external factors compelling this rate.

## IN ACTION

We are exploring how the dataset generated can enhance Adeption's AI models to enable real-time action scoring on the platform. By streamlining the identification of actions with low scores in this framework, we can prompt leaders to reassess their plans in the digital conversation, or trigger a real life coach intervention, driving better reflection rates for the leaders we support.

Whether action planning between team leader and team member, peer to peer, or with yourself, open ended coaching questions or prompts are helpful to set the scene for success. Our coaches offer further inspiration for great action setting below:



**In our next monthly meeting I will communicate the new strategy to my team. By carving out dedicated time for this, each person will have the space to deeply understand it.**

**I'll also set up 2 more sessions to discuss individual contributions to the strategy. These meetings will give everyone the chance to question and feedback in the session or via email after watching the recording to help build a sense of ownership.**

Example of a high scoring action

## EMBRACE THE HEAT

'Heat experiences' – designed to stretch us just past our edge of comfort – are one of the three core conditions of Vertical Development in adults. Adding an element of heat to actions is great for personal growth.

### TOOL

Heat experiences  
[Read More](#)

## CHECK IN

Reflect as you go on what's going well. If you aren't happy with progress or the outcome of your action isn't what you wanted, get curious about what's getting in the way and what you can learn.

### TOOL

Reflection  
[Read More](#)

## STAY MOTIVATED

Chunk larger actions into small, achievable steps to create a sense of progress. Feeling good about the process is key to staying motivated and sustaining your progress.

Leaders also love these self-coaching questions and prompts to guide their reflection activity.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

In three programs, 1546 actions by 381 leaders were collected and manually scored across 3 dimensions (What, Why, and When) to capture key aspects of an ideal action plan.

The scores in each dimension ranged from 0 (low/absent) to 2 (high) with a simplified summary of the schema being:

- What: 0 = no clear action identified; 1 = action identified but no discussion of how; 2 = clear action and approach discussed
- Why: 0 = no purpose or envisioned outcome mentioned; 1 = clear purpose for action mentioned; 2 = clear purpose and envisioned outcome discussed
- When: 0 = no mention of when action will be done; 1 = mention of an intention to find a time for action; 2 = clear when, or how often, action will be done

Reflections of these actions, when completed, were also collected. A logistic regression model helped confirm that the reflection rates for certain scores (What = 2 and When = 1) were significantly different from 0 scores in those dimensions.



## 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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