ADEPTION™

What today's leaders need for sustainable productivity.

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.

What today's leaders need for sustainable productivity

In this Insights series report, we explore four essential conditions that leaders need to feel effective and the key behaviors they associate with high–performing colleagues. These themes are grounded in an analysis of responses from 1,041 individuals across 19 organizations on the Adeption platform — a robust dataset.

We build on these core findings, offering practical guidance for leadership development professionals and people leaders to cultivate conditions that foster long–term productivity in teams.

ADEPTION INSIGHTS

Thematic analysis of the leaders' responses revealed four key pillars of productivity, each mentioned by over 40% of responses. These are tangible elements that leaders identified as important for their own effectiveness:

- Purpose + priorities: Mentioned by 62.2% of respondents, this was the most significant pillar. It speaks to the need to understand the 'why' behind our work and to have a clear line of sight from daily tasks to broader organizational goals.
- Empowerment + enablement: The resources and autonomy to get the job done.
- Collaboration + support: An environment built on trust and mutual assistance.
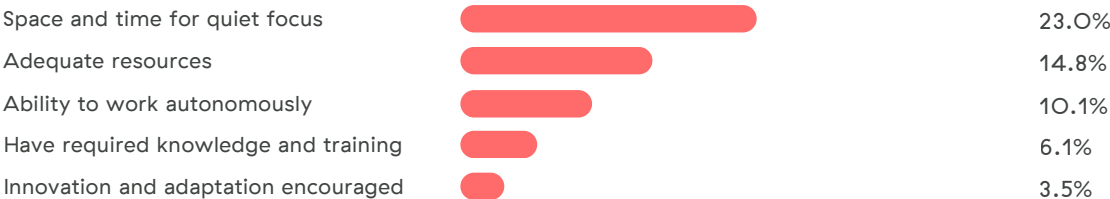- Inclusive team culture: Feeling valued, respected, and supported as an individual.

WHAT CONDITIONS ALLOW YOU TO BE YOUR MOST PRODUCTIVE + EFFECTIVE SELF?

Percentage of leaders who mentioned each theme

Percentage of leaders who mentioned each productivity pillar

PURPOSE + PRIORITIES

Theme	Percentage
Clear long–term targets and direction	26.8%
Clear short–term priorities	21.8%
A clear purpose	14.1%
A reasonable amount of pressure	11.9%
Interesting problems and challenges	6.9%

62.2%

EMPOWERMENT + ENABLEMENT

Theme	Percentage
Space and time for quiet focus	23.0%
Adequate resources	14.8%
Ability to work autonomously	10.1%
Have required knowledge and training	6.1%
Innovation and adaptation encouraged	3.5%

48.3%

COLLABORATION + SUPPORT

Theme	Percentage
Collaborative and open team culture	42.6%
A supportive manager or mentor	7.3%

46.1%

INCLUSIVE TEAM CULTURE

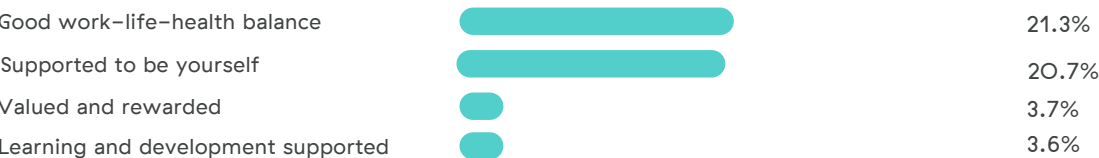| Theme	Percentage
Good work–life–health balance	21.3%
Supported to be yourself	20.7%
Valued and rewarded	3.7%
Learning and development supported	3.6%

43%

Figure 1. Percent of participants who mentioned each theme in their response (multiple themes allowed per response). Grouped by associated productivity pillar.
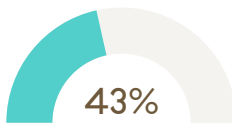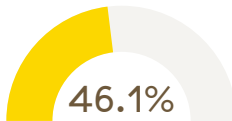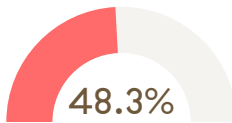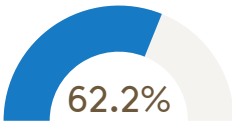
Figure 2. Percent of participants who mentioned each of the four productivity pillars in their response (multiple themes allowed per response).

When we shifted the focus and asked leaders what makes others appear productive/effective, the top theme that emerged was prioritizing and managing time well, closely followed by a new theme — having a calm and positive mindset. Nearly a quarter of all respondents observed that the most effective people in their professional lives demonstrate composure, rationality, and a constructive attitude, even in challenging situations. This insight suggests that our internal state has a visible and significant impact on how our effectiveness is perceived by others.

THINK OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE/EFFECTIVE PERSON YOU KNOW? WHAT MAKES THEM SO EFFECTIVE? TOP 5

27.4% Prioritize and manage time well

24.6% Calm and positive mindset

21.6% Communicate clearly and regularly

17.9% Build and maintain genuine relationships

16.9% Focused on a clear vision and strategy

Figure 3. Percent of participants who mentioned each theme in their response (multiple themes allowed per response). See the appendix for a full list of themes.

WHY IT MATTERS

In today's world of work, technology is enabling higher output and productivity expectations are increasing – creating an environment that can prioritize activity over sustainable performance. Employee and manager engagement levels are at historic lows,[1] indicating these ways of working are taking a toll.

Our data insights highlight that (1) people are productive when they have clarity around purpose and priorities, and (2) people regarded by others as productive and effective can cut through complexity and noise with a clear sense of purpose, strong prioritization, good communication and relationship skills, and importantly, a calm and positive mindset.

> **Research shows that leaders with strong emotional regulation skills lead teams that are rated 153% higher in performance.**[2]

These insights point to a solution that begins with leadership. Leaders who can model and cultivate intentional prioritization and emotional regulation can foster these traits in their teams, enabling sustainable productivity. The next section of this report provides some tools to support this mode of leadership.

IN ACTION

MODEL CALMNESS

Your team takes cues from you. This phenomenon, known as emotional contagion, is a product of 'mirror neurons' in our brains that cause us to subconsciously mimic the emotions of those around us. Take a moment before your next important team interaction for a personal 'check–in'. Are you feeling calm and positive yourself? If you're not, consider one small action you can take to ground yourself, whether it's a few deep breaths, a short walk, or a moment of quiet reflection.

BOOK

Emotional Contagion
Details

EMPOWER WITH TRUST

By actively practicing trust–building behaviors and designing systems that reinforce fairness and transparency, leaders can lay the groundwork for a psychologically safe environment where people are more likely to take ownership and approach challenges with a more proactive, positive mindset.

TOOL Psychological Safety Cultivating It In Your Teams
Read More

HUNT FOR FRICTION

Make it a regular practice to identify and remove the obstacles that hinder your team's ability to do their best work. This can range from inefficient meetings and overly complex approval chains to outdated technology and unclear communication channels. Proactively ask your team, "What makes it difficult for you to do your best work here?" and then take action to address the issues they raise.

BOOK The Friction Project
Details

ATTENTION, ENERGY + COMMITMENTS

To connect your daily actions to your purpose, check for alignment between your attention, energy, and commitments. Reflect on your top five in each area:

- Attention: What are you focused on?
- Energy: What consumes your energy and effort?
- Commitments: What are your priorities?

This exercise quickly reveals if your priorities are clear and if you are dedicating your most valuable resources to what truly matters most.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Adeption has over ten years of experience delivering leadership development experiences, empowering thousands of leaders to drive their continuous development. Through our platform's conversational interface, we've amassed extensive datasets on leadership development, including challenges faced and strategies used. This includes data from over 100K users, nearly 3 million coaching question responses, and almost 400K insights (reflections on actions taken). Unlocking these insights allows us to deliver personalized, data–driven experiences to leaders globally at — at a scale that was never possible before. This report analyzes responses to two free text coaching questions on the Adeption platform from 1041 people across 19 organizations.

Question 1: 'What conditions allow you to be your most productive and effective self?'
The thematic analyses of this question produced 16 unique themes, out of which key components of productivity, productivity pillars, emerged. Responses could be tagged with multiple themes.
Productivity pillar definitions
Purpose + priorities: Has, and can communicate clearly, the purpose and expectations of their work. Includes theme tags: Clear long–term targets/direction, Clear short–term priorities, Clear work purpose, A reasonable amount of pressure, Interesting problems and challenges.
Empowerment + enablement: Has what's needed to do work well and a permission structure to go ahead and do it. Includes theme tags: Space and time for quiet focus, Adequate resources, Ability to work autonomously, Have required knowledge and training, Innovation and adaptation encouraged.
Collaboration + Support: Is able to draw on and rely on others to make progress on work. Includes theme tags: Collaborative and open team culture, A supportive manager or mentor.
Inclusive team culture: Feels recognized, respected, and tended to as a unique individual. Includes theme tags: Good work–life–health balance, Supported to be yourself, Valued and rewarded, Learning and development supported.

About this report cont.

Question 2: Think of the most productive/effective person you know? What makes them so effective?
The thematic analyses of this question also produced 16 unique themes, out of which all but one could be tagged to an existing productivity pillar. Responses could be tagged with multiple themes.

Productivity pillar definitions
Purpose + priorities: Has, and can communicate clearly, the purpose and expectations of their work. Includes theme tags:. Communicate clearly and regularly, Focused on a clear vision and strategy, Have passion for their role, Effective problem solver.
Empowerment + enablement: Has what's needed to do work well and a permission structure to go ahead and do it. Prioritize and manage time well, Act confidently and decisively, Subject matter expert, Work hard.
Collaboration + Support: Is able to draw on and rely on others to make progress on work. Includes theme tags: Build and maintain genuine relationships, Provides support and guidance when needed, Effective delegators and share work, Encourages idea sharing and generation, Seeks out and uses different perspectives, Grows their own network and influence.
Inclusive team culture: Demonstrates that they are recognized, respected, and tended to as a unique individual. Includes theme tag: Good work-life-health balance.

1 Gallup, State of the Global Workplace 2024 Report
2 Erin Eatough, PhD, Emotional regulation and peak performance: What's the connection?

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.

TALK TO US