ADEPTION™

Great leaders
are great coaches.

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.

Most of us will work with an unforgettable leader throughout our careers — someone who inspires, motivates, and empowers individuals and teams to achieve their best work. And great leadership isn't exclusive to those in management positions. As organizations face growing complexity, building leadership mindsets and capabilities at every level — from the C–Suite to the frontline — will help their teams thrive in dynamic environments.

So what defines great leadership? To help answer this question, we analyzed nearly 1,000 responses from leaders on the Adeption platform to questions relating to this topic. Eleven themes were found, each mentioned by at least 5% of leaders.

DESCRIBE THE **BEST LEADER** YOU'VE EVER HAD...

44.1%
of leaders responded ... a
GREAT COACH AND DEVELOPER

Theme	%
Coaches and developers	44.1%
Empathetic listener	26.2%
Great communicator	19.4%
Strong interpersonal skills	15.7%
Integrity	11.4%
Strategic planning and vision	10.4%
Available to team	10.0%
Subject matter expert	8.9%
Macromanagement	8.4%
Builds team identity	6.9%
Calm and composed	5.6%

Figure 1. Percent of participants who mentioned each theme in their response (multiple themes allowed per response). Themes mentioned by less than 5% of participants, including responses that did not fall into a theme not included.

Out of 993 leaders, **44.1% identified the best leader they've had as a strong coach and developer**, both for themselves and their wider team. Given the substantial emphasis on this competency / quality, we dug deeper, exploring related findings in previous analyses of leaders' responses on the Adeption platform

The theme of coaching and developing others consistently emerged from leaders reflections across various development experience touchpoints, underscoring its significance. Key findings include:

- **Team Knowledge/Capability:** When asked about current challenges they're facing, knowledge and capability was mentioned by 16.9% of leaders (making it the second most common challenge theme).
- **Coaching and Relationships:** For leaders completing a 'Leading Others' module on Adeption, 21.2% planned development actions relating to this theme (making it the most frequently planned action theme).
- **Post–Program Behavior Changes:** After completing a program on Adeption, 14.6% of leaders reported behavior changes relating to the theme of coaching others (rather than providing solutions), and 8% mentioned delegating more effectively.

In the next section, we explore why coaching is crucial for leaders and organizations today and provide inspiration for how to cultivate coaching mindsets and cultures.

WHY IS COACHING IMPORTANT?

As our operating environments continue to evolve, the traits that define great leadership are changing too. The skills and competencies that served yesterday's leaders are less effective today. In particular, we're seeing the most adaptive organizations make the shift from Authority (Command and Control) leadership to Influence (Servant Leadership).

A key driver of this shift is the types of challenges organizations are facing. In the past, leaders primarily faced technical challenges and could provide technical solutions easily. These problems had tried-and-true solutions that simply needed to be executed. **Today, however, leaders face adaptive challenges that require adaptive solutions**. Coaching and enabling others to be adaptive, flexible and action-focused is critical to solving challenges with no simple solution.

Organizations agree. According to '**The Future of Jobs Report 2023**' by the World Economic Forum (WEF)*, the projected future core skills for successfully working with others align with our findings that coaching is a vital competency:
- 42% for empathy and active listening
- 38% for leadership and social influence
- 24% for teaching and mentoring

IN ACTION

Leaders are adopting various techniques and leveraging favorite frameworks to strengthen and expand their coaching capabilities, thereby increasing their overall leadership effectiveness.

COACHING SELF

Leaders are developing their inner coach by transitioning from Critic to Coach.

TOOL Critic versus Coach
Read More

COACHING OTHERS

To structure coaching conversations, leaders are using the GROW framework.

TOOL GROW Model
Read More

COACHING STAKEHOLDERS

Leaders and practitioners alike are using coaching prompts to manage stakeholder relationships and improve collaboration.

In an Adeption Global Chat, guest speaker, and people strategist, David Hyatt illustrated how he uses a coaching approach to challenge senior leaders in a positive, productive and non confrontational way.

VIDEO Global Chats with David Hyatt
Watch segment (3 minutes)

> **Whether we are coaching ourselves or team members, careful coaching and questioning is a powerful lever to shift behavior from Below the Line (closed, negative, and stuck in the past) to Above the Line (open, positive, and solution-focused).**

*The core of the WEF 2023 Future of Jobs Report is based on a survey dataset covering the expectations of a wide cross-section of the world's largest employers related to job trends and directions.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Adeption has delivered leadership development experiences to thousands of leaders over 10+ years, empowering them to 'learn how to learn' and continuously develop their capacity and effectiveness. Coaching conversations on our digital platform help leaders unpack their challenges and experiment with new approaches through deliberate on–the–job practice.

Questions analyzed:
In each study, a thematic analysis was performed on a sample of answers, and responses were manually read and tagged with all themes mentioned in their response.

Great leaders: We identified 11 programs that included in their digital workouts a question similar to "Think of the best boss/manager you have ever had, what specifically made them great?". These were open–text questions (i.e. people could write whatever they wanted, at any length). Using a sample of answers from 993 people, 11 recurring themes were found, each mentioned by at least 5% of leaders. Those with none were tagged "Other topic".

Challenges: Challenges were answers to the question "What is your biggest challenge to achieve your goals?" (or close variation) that was asked in 11 programs across 11 organizations. Sub–sampling was used to prevent large programs from being over–represented in the sample, so no organization represents more than 17% of the sample. This sample is not intended to be a representative demographic of leaders. Answers could be tagged with as many thematic tags that were relevant.

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.

What has changed: We identified 19 programs that included in their final digital workouts a question similar to either "What has changed for you after completing this program?" or "What do you plan to continue doing after completing this program?" These were open–text questions (i.e. people could write whatever they wanted, at any length). In a sample of answers from 1199 people, 14 recurring themes were identified. Those with none were tagged "Other" topic.

Explore insight series reports that analyze the Challenges and Actions or What has Changed data.

ABOUT ADEPTION

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

COACHING

Flexible, scalable coaching solutions for leaders of all levels, Adeption coaching delivers growth in the flow of work, in a psychologically safe environment.

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.

BUILDING A COACHING CULTURE PROGRAM

This program builds leaders' coaching capabilities, improving how they coach themselves, their teams, and manage stakeholder relationships + collaboration.

FREE DEMO   **TALK TO US**