

Embrace An 'Integrator Mindset' For Organizational Success

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As leaders, most of us would like to believe that we have the ability to lead organizational transformation effectively.

Expert and author Carole Dweck refers to this view as a “growth mindset” – when people work to improve their abilities and skills and, as a result, demonstrate significant improvements in leadership. One major benefit of the growth mindset, Dweck says, is how you view setbacks. People who embrace a growth mindset often view mistakes as learning lessons and their initial failures become part of the overall development process.

Alternatively, there’s the “fixed mindset,” which assumes abilities are carved in stone with limited room for change. Fixed-mindset leaders are often more cautious and resist venturing outside their comfort zones, sometimes leading to failure in leadership and business success. It’s essential that leaders not only understand their mindset, but have some understanding of the contributing factors, including the experience of organizational stages as described in a seminal article by Larry Greiner, and learning from the stages of human development and where they might be stuck.

My research with hundreds of leaders over the last decade has focused on how we perceive the world through the lens of our personal work-life journey – and via our experience in organizations where we have worked. Both are a source for the mindset we find ourselves most comfortable adopting as leaders.

The challenge is that many leaders who strive for a growth mindset – assessing their strategy, structure, systems and processes – hit a roadblock because they don't think about how their learned perceptions of how companies function affects their approach, ultimately impacting their contribution to the organization as a whole.

Leadership Traits: Which One Fits Your Style?

Our experiences of what helps us succeed as leaders shapes and fixes our mindsets, which intuitively drive our behavior and approach. This can provide us with what we need to devise quick solutions to the workplace issues we frequently face.

However, as changes happen rapidly around us, these shortcuts can also be our downfall.

Here is a list of leadership style traits. Can you identify with one of them?

- **Idiosyncratic:** Focuses on his or her own goals to the detriment of others; often resists process.
- **Autocratic:** Does not delegate or expect others to engage thoughtfully, resulting in a lack of learning and development, and leaves people feeling accountable.
- **Bureaucratic:** Things work slowly, and everyone has to know their place.
- **Democratic:** Engages and empowers, but can err towards consensus to the extent that decisions are delayed or not made in a timely fashion.
- **Integrator:** Trust-based, engaging and creates an environment in which all feel accountable, empowered and networked. Encourages a culture of creativity.

My research shows that results achieved by those leaders who develop an “integrator mindset” are demonstrably better in achieving and exceeding organization goals. The integrator mindset enables us to see there are numerous ways to achieve success, and that we simply must understand the context and ensure that we adapt our approach accordingly.

Drive Your Company Forward With An ‘Integrator Mindset’

While our developmental journey through life tends to be physiologically driven, our experience of organizations is purely psychological. For example, when we are successful, we risk plateauing and getting too comfortable with a “winning” perspective. Unfortunately, when new challenges arise that don't align with your mental perspective, there's an inclination to see the world as “not right” versus whether your mindset fits the scenario.

Organizational mindsets are an ideal way of assessing the choices we have to adapt to changing competitive environments. They also provide a realistic framework for personal change. They drive – but are not a substitute – for good leadership behaviors.

The good news is that the innovation that occurs by adaptation of our mindset can, in turn, change the environment.

There is an appropriate leadership approach for each stage in an organization's evolution.

What picture do you hold in your mind about how your organization should work? In this chart, you see what look like organization structures, but actually represent commonly held perceptions of how we relate to each other. The table can help you assess where you are more comfortable. Once you identify where you are, think about how this might impact how you approach your leadership challenges – does your mindset help or get in the way?

The ability to spot red flags described in the chart is the first step to adaptation and transformation, and can lead to adopting an “integrator” mindset.

Developing A Mindset For Success

The integrator mindset has a cascade effect – a good integrator has energy, optimism and resilience, forms positive relationships, and has a consequential impact on the well-being of others in their organization.

There are several ways to develop this mindset. The first step is consistently taking time to reflect on the environment you are experiencing – market as well as organizational.

Next, you can embrace an integrator mindset by:

- Developing self-awareness of personal assumptions about the world and how these impact personal behavior.
- Leading by developing good self-awareness; actively listening to and empathizing with others; seeking cooperation and helping others succeed; promoting trust by acting transparently and modeling accountability.
- Adapting to different environments proactively and with intent to influence rather than react.
- Encouraging peer-to-peer relationships and recognizing differential roles and responsibilities without pulling rank.
- Understanding the internal and external organization environments and how they are changing and adapting to each other.

- Forming a supportive network to better connect the organization.
- Fostering a learning environment, and cultivating developmental opportunities, so teams stay motivated and adaptive.

Why Being An Integrator Matters In Today's Competitive Landscape

In an era in which organizations like Google seem to evolve overnight from infancy to global dominance, we regularly witness integrated leaders who go the distance without impeding competitive momentum.

A successful leader with an integrator mindset understands all the other mindset stages and, in turn, can effectively manage others developmentally to achieve greater flexibility. Their broad worldview can heighten strategic awareness and allow them to understand the importance of process and communication in a networked organization.

Ultimately, the integrated mindset can help organizations be more prepared for the future, especially in our increasingly complex, network-integrated world. Leaders who develop this mindset will more successfully negotiate obstacles both now and in the future.

As seen on [Forbes Coaches Council](#)

Check out my other contributions to the Forbes Coaches Council:

["How to Give Constructive Criticism That Doesn't Offend: 15 Tips From Expert Coaches"](#)

["15 Ways To Prepare For Your Company's Next Generation Of Leaders"](#)

["Getting Client Buy-In: 13 Approaches Coaches Can Use"](#)



My research studies with many hundreds of leaders over the last 10 years suggests that results achieved by leaders who develop an integrator mindset are demonstrably better in achieving and exceeding organization goals. This is the only mindset that enables us to see there are many different ways to achieve success, we just need to understand the context and ensure that our approach is adapted to this.

Here are some steps successful leaders took to change their behavior that you can practice to become an integrator:

1. *Lead with an Integrator Mindset* by developing good self-awareness; actively listening to and empathizing with others; seeking cooperation and reaching out to help others succeed; promote trust by acting transparently and modeling accountability.

Remember that for others to be accountable, they need you to be a good delegator and coach.

2. Encourage *peer-to-peer relationships* recognizing differential roles and responsibilities and relating without pulling rank.
3. *Form a supportive network* to connect the organization.
4. Foster a *learning organization*, providing broad developmental opportunities, so that the organization remains motivated and adaptive – ready for the next stage.

If you want to learn more about how you can change your mindset, Percepi can help you do this. Our workshops are based on how to develop this mindset. Tell us what you think on our [or page](#), and feel free to share this post.
