

7 steps to develop a leadership mindset within your workplace



Many frontline managers get promoted into leadership roles without any training to be a leader or people manager. These leaders need to be trained to understand the impact they will have on engagement, retention, turnover, accountability, and results—and how to lead in a way that produces the right outcomes in each of these areas—or they become a liability. Their ability to self-assess, create efficiencies by leveraging the talents on their team, and manage a remote, hybrid, or on-site workforce, is critical to individual, team, and organizational success. Great management skills don't emerge overnight, but there are some things you can do starting today to develop a leadership mindset within your team.

Leaders aren't born, they're made

Leadership is a skill that can be learned. It's not about "being in charge," it's about influencing and inspiring others to do their best work. As a leader, you are accountable for the team's success—and that means giving people opportunities to grow and develop their skills so they can contribute in the

way most needed by the organization. Great leaders create an environment where people want to come together as a group and do amazing things together. As a manager, it's your job to develop this leadership mindset in your teammates from day one.

1. Lead by example with the right mindset

Being a leader within your organization makes you a cultural steward. When you're in a position of authority, it's your job to exemplify the way others should take ownership of their work and their impact on their teammates. That starts with your mindset. And your ability to help others adopt the right mindset is the key to creating the changes you need.

According to McKinsey, executives at companies that took the time to address mindset challenges were [four times more likely](#) than those that didn't to rate their change programs as successful. Arbinger shows people how shifting their individual mindset from an inward, self-focused mindset to outward team-oriented mindset can lead to exponential shifts in organizational outcomes.

Arbinger's best-selling book, *Leadership and Self-Deception*, is a great read for leaders on your team. The book shows that the key to leadership lies not in what we do but in who we are. This important insight and the actionable steps it outlines to help leaders change in the way they see others has proven to have powerful implications not only for organizational leadership but in readers' personal lives as well.

Check out this video about how self-deception relates to leadership here:

2. Turn employees into high-performing leaders

Creating opportunities for people to lead projects, initiatives, and workstreams is a great way to develop an employee's leadership mindset before promoting them into a management position. This gives employees a taste of what it's like to be accountable for something that impacts and involves others within the safety of their current roles. Below we've highlighted some ways you can create leadership opportunities for your employees.

Assign special projects

Assigning special projects is a great way to give employees a chance to take charge. By assigning out tasks, aligning with stakeholders, and managing deadlines, they can get a feel for what it's like to balance multiple priorities and adjusting accordingly. These projects can be cross-functional or focused on specific areas of the business, and they should challenge the employee to take on people-related responsibilities beyond their current job duties.

Encourage cross-functional collaboration

Encouraging employees to collaborate with colleagues from different departments or teams is a great way to develop leadership skills. This helps employees learn to work with people who have different perspectives and skill sets, which can enhance their ability to lead diverse teams.

Allow employees to lead team meetings or events

Allowing employees to lead team meetings or events is another way to create opportunities for leadership development. This can include leading a brainstorming session, facilitating a

team-building activity, or presenting a project to senior leaders.

Offer stretch assignments

Stretch assignments are tasks or projects that challenge employees to work outside their comfort zone and develop new skills. These assignments can include managing a workstream, working with new technologies or systems, or leading a project with high visibility and impact.

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4 ways to create leadership opportunities for employees:



Assign special projects



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Allow employees to lead meetings or events



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To encourage your employees' growth as leaders:

- Give them opportunities to try new things (and fail).
- Be patient with them when they make mistakes; this will help develop empathy within your organization as well as provide valuable lessons learned for future projects/initiatives/etc.

By creating opportunities for people to lead within your organization and empowering them to succeed, you can help them build confidence in their leadership abilities—making them all

the more ready to step up into management roles when the time comes.

3. Provide ongoing feedback

Before you can correct and teach others in a meaningful way you need to build a relationship.

The second way to develop leaders within your team is to provide ongoing feedback. But don't just deliver feedback; make sure that you are giving feedback in a way that helps the employee grow and learn from their experiences, while also making them feel respected.

Feedback is an important part of growing as an individual, but oftentimes we only offer feedback when there is a problem.

When we offer constructive criticism we can come across as harsh or unsympathetic. When providing feedback, try not to focus on what the person did wrong—instead focus on their impact and how they could improve.

Tools like [Arbinger's 3A+ framework](#) and the influence pyramid pictured below are great ways to operationalize feedback. Having a structure for approaching these conversations (which can sometimes be challenging) is a great way to equip budding leaders for situations they may come across.



4. Give your employees the tools to make their own decisions

Equipping team members with tools and frameworks is a great way to set them up to win. As we mentioned above, starting with a mindset adjustment is crucial. But tools are a great way to ensure employees maintain the momentum and keep applying an outward mindset at work.

Using tried and true leadership tools, you can give employees the freedom to make their own decisions while also ensuring they're adhering to a framework that's proven to be effective. This gives them more flexibility to problem solve on their own while also evaluating other factors like their impact on others.

The skill of developing accountable people is the most important skill a leader can learn. If we have to hold people accountable, then our people are not being accountable.

Here's how investing in tools can help your team members build a leadership mindset:

Improves decision-making

Having tools and frameworks in place helps employees make better decisions by providing a clear structure and methodology for problem-solving. It helps them analyze complex situations, weigh options, and make informed decisions that are aligned with the organization's goals and values.

Increases efficiency

Tools and frameworks streamline decision-making processes, saving time and resources. Employees can quickly identify the best course of action, reducing the risk of delays and errors. Arbinger's Impact Check-In tool can be used for this!

Enhances consistency

Tools and frameworks ensure consistency in decision-making across the organization. This is especially important in large organizations, where decisions are made by multiple individuals across various departments or locations.

Fosters collaboration

Having common tools and frameworks for decision-making encourages collaboration and teamwork because they allow employees to share insights and perspectives based on a common understanding of the decision-making process. Arbinger's [Meet to Learn](#) and [Start In The Right Way](#) tools perfect tools to enable this level of collaboration.

Builds employee confidence

Equipping employees with tools and frameworks gives them the confidence to tackle complex problems and make sound decisions. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation, as employees feel more empowered and engaged in their work.

5. Help leaders recognize their impact

Being a leader today is high stakes. Managers have a bigger impact on their employees than many of us even realize, so it's important to help leaders truly understand how much they influence their teams. (Managers are responsible for [70% of the variance](#) in employee engagement, after all!)

When managers feel like they're a part of an organization that truly understands them, they're more likely to do their best work. In fact, according to Great Place to Work, people are [three times more likely](#) to look forward to coming to work when they feel heard and that they belong.

6. Invest in leadership development and training

Training and development are important for all teams, but it's especially crucial for leaders. In fact, [research suggests](#) that an investment in [leadership mindset development](#) can result in a 25% improvement in business outcomes. If you want your team members to grow into effective managers that can make a real impact in your organization, they need to know how to empower others, boost performance, and navigate challenging situations.

The first step is figuring out what kind of training or

development would be most helpful for your team members' particular needs and then finding a way to make sure they get it. The two basic sources are:

- Internal resources within your company (like employee mentorship groups)
- External resources outside of work (like conferences or workshops)

(Hint: Most teams benefit from a combined approach!)

Leadership requires a unique set of skills that can be sharpened through training and coaching. Truly effective leadership training will unlock a new level of self-awareness in your team members, helping them to be more effective and empathetic managers.

This training and coaching prepares them to tackle the range of challenges and situations they face daily. Just take a look at all of these situations managers encounter on the job (and the Arbinger tools available to help solve them!)

Accountability Tools

- Job Map
- The 3 Questions
- Clarify Roles
- Turn Objectives Outward
- 3A+ Development Framework
- Report "Down"
- Report "Up"
- Progress Discussion
- Impact Check-In

Collaboration Tools

- Start in the Right Way
- Apply S.A.M.
- Meet to Learn
- Meet to Give
- Biggest Headache
- Collaborative Helping
- Help Another Team
- Who is Affected?
- Tackle a Complex Problem

Conflict/Relationship Tools

- Check Your Mindset
- Focus on Facts
- Find Out-of-the-Box Space
- Enhance Relationships
- Help Others Feel Appreciated
- Imagine You Were Outward
- Diagram Collusion
- De-Blame Collusion
- Daily Application

Supervision Tools

- Hiring Interview Questions
- Who to Promote
- Onboarding Conversation
- Help People Stretch
- Apply the Influence Pyramid
- Make Communication Safe
- Correct Performance Problems
- Help Others Resolve Collusions
- Pre-Termination Assessment

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7. Offer ongoing coaching

[Leadership coaching](#) isn't a one-and-done initiative, and considering the impact managers have on their employees, it should actually be a top priority. But despite how important it is, less than [5% of businesses](#) have adopted leadership mindset development at all levels.

Consider this: [over 70% of leaders](#) who receive coaching benefit from improved work performance, enhanced relationships, and more effective communication skills. Teaming up with a leadership development partner like Arbinger ensures that you're not only signing managers up for one workshop or course and sending them on their way, you're ensuring that ongoing coaching, tools, and resources are available to your valued leaders at every step of the way.

The key to a leadership mindset? Invest in your future leaders

When you work to develop an outward mindset in all employees in your organization, you're developing a wider pool of future leaders—leaders who understand their impact on others and are equipped with the tools to succeed as they step into a manager role. Perhaps nothing you do will be more important to the ongoing success of your organization than building today the leaders who will lead tomorrow.

Want to start developing leaders within your organization? [Get in touch with an Arbinger expert today!](#)