

Unlock True Change: 4 Steps to Lead Organizations to an Outward Mindset



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People often use mindset to refer to a core belief about oneself. But that's far too narrow a focus. The biggest lever for change is not a change merely in self-belief but a fundamental change in the way people see and regard their connections and obligations to others. The mutual impact people have on one another turns on whether they carry a self-focused inward mindset or an impact-focused outward mindset. In organizations, changing from an inward to an outward mindset unlocks a whole new level of collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness among individuals, teams, and the organization itself.

A [McKinsey & Company study](#) found that organizations that identify and address pervasive mindsets at the outset are "four times more likely to succeed in organizational-change efforts than are companies that overlook this stage." Leaders are critical to this effort: when leaders shift to an outward mindset, they naturally invite the rest of the organization to follow. When an organization is operating from an outward mindset, the dynamic shifts from individual to collective

results and from singular gain to mutual reciprocity, resulting in a far better and sustained performance.

4 Steps to Lead Organizations to an Outward Mindset

To start shifting mindset and jumpstart this transformation, leaders should ask themselves questions in four essential areas. Each plays a key role in leading organizational change.

1. **Question your privilege.** Ask yourself questions about how leaders position themselves in your organization. Do I need the prime parking spot? The best office space? Enlist colleagues in this self-examination. Do we segregate ourselves in different cafeterias or more preferred parts of the building? Can the perks that the few enjoy be made available to others? Can any trappings of “big-shotness” be removed? And: If we treat and pay ourselves generously, are we appropriately generous as well with our employees?
2. **Consider the experiences of others.** Actively question the traditions and practices in your organization. For instance, allow yourself to be guided by questions that prompt a careful consideration of the experience of others throughout the organization. Question what it’s like to be an employee in your company. Do your employees feel valued? Do they feel understood? Do they feel appreciated by leadership? What distinctions in the workplace might be troubling to them? What distinctions might make them feel less important?
3. **Aim to collapse distinctions.** Start to consider what adjustments might be helpful, asking questions such as: What can we do to help others understand how we value and appreciate them? What can we do to more fully understand others’ viewpoints and concerns? What trappings of leadership currently exist in the

organization— and which of these make good business sense? Which of these trappings do not help the business? What can we do to collapse the distinctions between leaders and others in the organization?

4. **Start to measure and reassess.** Lastly, consider how you will measure the impact of these changes and continuously reassess the distinctions that arise. What can we do to stay more fully connected to employees? What can we do to ensure that we collect and stay open to feedback and suggestions from people at all levels of the organization? How can we continuously check ourselves as leaders to make sure that we are not letting unnecessary distinctions separate us from others?

Leaders, Shift Your Mindset First. Then You Can Start the Process of Changing Mindset in Your Organization.

Asking these questions gives you the knowledge and understanding you need to shift to an outward mindset as a leader. Then you're equipped to make a game plan and start the process of changing mindsets in your organization. The power of an outward mindset is that it generates the kind of trust, transparency and cohesion – between people and between teams – that helps organizations grow over the long term. Rather than being a quick fix, it's a total approach to change. Far more than about behavior, it gets to the heart of what truly drives remarkable creativity and performance.