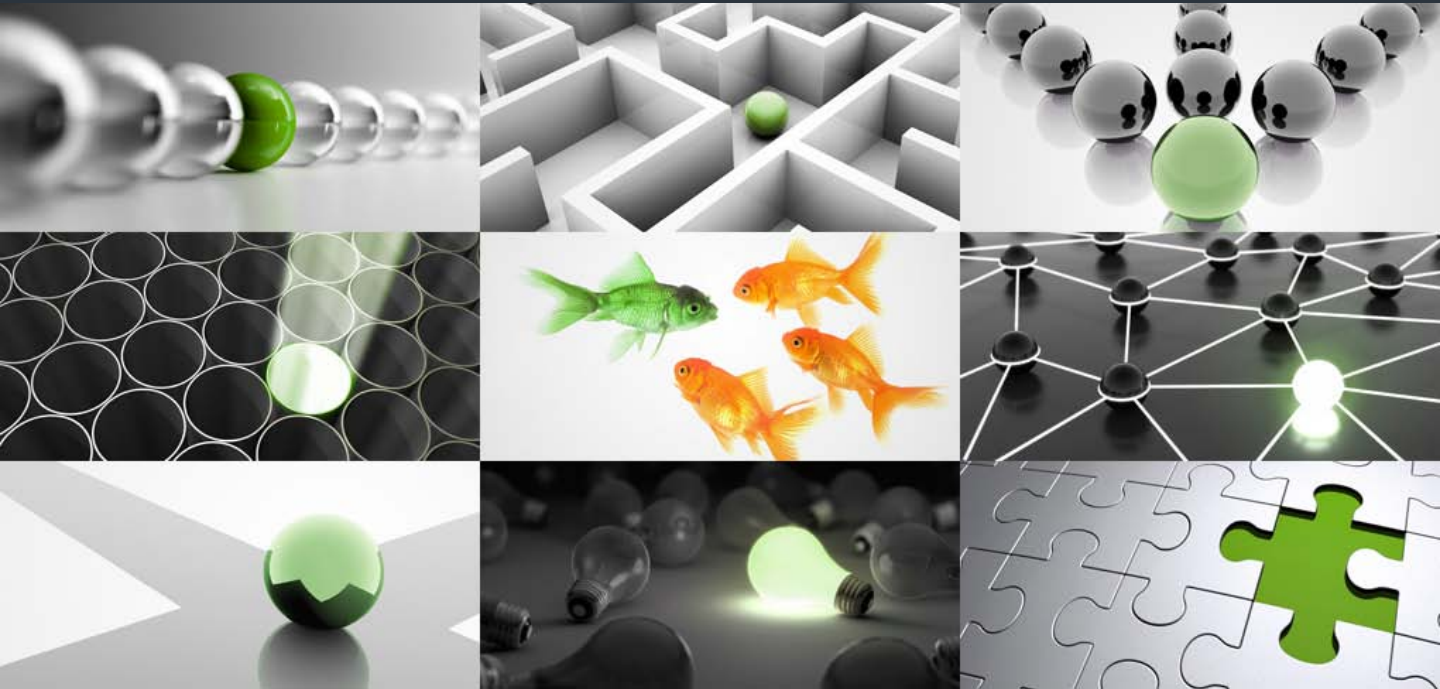


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# Rialto White Paper: Changing Mindsets to Drive Performance

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# 1. Introduction

**People drive performance, what drives people?**

**People are primarily driven by emotion which translates into actions and behaviours. Emotions are influenced by the way individuals interpret the actions and behaviours directed towards them.**

**Research shows that people want to:**

- Do something meaningful
- Make a contribution
- Have a sense of belonging
- Feel valued and rewarded

When these needs are met, it creates a positive emotional experience.

According to Harvard Business School researchers, **85%** of business success depends on a positive mental attitude. The Cox Report on American business puts that figure even higher. In its survey of corporate executives, **94%** attributed their success to positive attitudes.

Positive attitudes lead to enthusiasm and energy, and these in turn lead to results. Robert Merton, a 20th century sociologist coined the term "self-fulfilling prophecy" to describe this phenomenon.

A survey of 500 companies showed nine out of the top ten obstacles to corporate change were linked to the capabilities, attitudes or behaviours of people.

A performance mindset can be defined as positive attitudes and expectations about acceptable levels of performance, productivity and profitability.

## 2. Today's Mindset

As the global economic crisis rumbles on with continuing uncertainty and no light at the end of the tunnel, many employees are weary, worn down, battered and bruised.

They may no longer be inspired by their job but trapped by the economic environment, creating mixed feelings towards their employer resulting in them operating below their potential.

The motivation they feel is negative - pushing themselves out of a fear of what might happen, terrified of losing their job if they do not achieve targets and results. This type of motivation is unsustainable and leads to underperformance, burnout and eventually the loss of skilled workers.

The challenge facing leaders is how not only how to engage workforces and get the best out but how to keep them focused, motivated and, ultimately, in the right mindset.

### Key Traits of Mindset

Mindset:

- Is followed by performance
- Is fuelled by goals and purpose
- Drives performance level
- Is a choice
- Is a personal responsibility
- Can change with experience
- Is strengthened by recovery from failure
- Is infectious

## 3. Individual and Corporate Mindsets

Studies have identified two kinds of mindsets:

### **Growth and Fixed**

People with a growth mindset view life as a series of challenges and opportunities for improving.

Those with a fixed mindset tend to believe that they are set as either good or bad.

On the negative, this can manifest itself in people believing that they are good enough and do not have to work hard, or that working hard will not change anything.

These mindsets do not just necessarily apply only to individuals but can just as easily manifest themselves in the wider world of corporate world and the culture within organisations.

Achieving strategic goals and accelerating performance results requires that employees at multiple levels of the organisation adjust their performance mindset. Many companies do not succeed at helping those employees change despite investing heavily in formal initiatives such as financial incentives or training programmes.

The problem is that they neglect an essential aspect of what motivates employees—the emotional confidence and positive performance mindset that they must bring to the organisation and their jobs in order to do well and to exceed expectations. By mobilising this mindset, companies can accelerate the behaviour changes required to elevate business performance.

## 4. Doing Things Differently, Thinking Differently

As people and companies try to progress to the next level, developing, adapting and even changing mindsets is crucial. Often the mistake is made of doing the same thing with greater frequency or intensity but doing the same thing gets the same results.

Another related and common problem is not setting performance mindset high enough. Both individuals and corporations tend to play it safe and, for example, strive for reasonable growth and satisfactory success.

This is fine to maintain the status quo but to accelerate performance and ultimately success, there needs to be a step up in ambition, and potentially risk.

Aiming for above average growth and success increases the risk of failure. However, those who are willing to change their mindset despite the risks will understand that whilst they may not fully realise their ultimate goal they will likely far exceed what they would have achieved had they played it safe.

### **What Sets Leaders Apart and Enables Them to Change Mindsets**

Getting people to think differently is a difficult task. That's why perhaps the central attribute of a successful leader is the ability to change the way people think.

For top executives, the challenge is especially great. They must get thousands of people in an organisation to think in similar terms about the purpose of the business and what they individually must do to accomplish that purpose.

*“If all you ever do is all you’ve ever done, then all you’ll ever get is all you ever got”*

## 5. To Increase Performance, Mindsets Have to be Raised

The right mindset is critical to success, take for example, elite athletes where the highest level of performance is produced by those whose mindset matches their physical prowess.

Research shows that many organisations and consequently employees are only achieving a fraction of the performance they expect.

**The Foundations of a Positive and Performance Mindset are:**

- **Absolute clarity in terms of goals and expectations**  
Communication needs to be clear and focused with two way dialogue to make sure that employees are confident to carry forward strategic plans.
- **Engagement and inspiration**  
Employees need to feel involved and active in making a contribution; inspired and motivated towards exceptional standards.
- **Genuinely motivated by self-improvement**  
Just turning up to work, doing your job and then heading home is no longer enough. To achieve organisational growth strategies, keep pace with competitors and make real progress, organisational and individual mindsets have to be raised.

”People must want to, be able to and then produce it when it counts.”



### **The Three Key Steps to Raising Employee Mindsets:**

#### **Recognise, Reward and Celebrate**

Success is not just good for business; it's also rewarding for the individual and work should be an inspiring and fulfilling experience. People who actively use positive actions towards improvement lead more fulfilling lives, filled with opportunity and reward and organisations should recognise, reward and celebrate these efforts.

#### **Ensure Team Efforts are Visible**

Contributing to a cause greater than one's self is a very compelling motivation for many employees.

Promoting visible links between personal productivity and organisational effectiveness is a highly effective way in which leaders can inspire their team to perform.

#### **Actively Demonstrate Passion and Energy**

Communicate with passion, energy and enthusiasm – not just by talking through what needs to be done but by setting the scene, bringing the goals alive and enthusing about what the results of achieving those goals will mean for everyone.

## 6. Barriers to Changing

There are several prominent obstacles to changing performance mindset. Changing your performance mindset and the resulting performance takes more time, effort and energy; it can get uncomfortable when you raise the bar. You have to convince yourself that it is worth it.

Negative thoughts and limiting beliefs need to be dealt with and overcome in order to move forward , typical concerns include:

- **Anxiety**
- **Not feeling ready**
- **Worrying about weaknesses**
- **High expectations which may not be achievable**
- **Lack of confidence in colleagues/team**
- **Lack of focus**
- **Worry about losing face**
- **Protectionist mindset, more concerned with keeping job rather than enhancement**

Fear holds people back, fear of failure is the most dominant fear but fear of change also prevents people and companies changing their performance mindset. If fear is an issue, it feels safer and more comfortable to not even try.

## 7. How to Improve Mindsets

As anyone who has ever tried to persuade someone to change political allegiances knows, getting people to think differently is a nearly impossible task. That's why perhaps the central attribute of a successful leader is the ability to change the way people think.

At the most basic level, in order to have a common mindset, employees need to be aligned with the most simple elements of their place in the organisation and expectations of what they need to deliver.

For example, in a study of levels of engagement and mindset across a range of different organisations, the best performing company had 91% of employees agreeing with the statement, "I know what's expected of me at work."

For top executives, the challenge is especially great: They must get thousands of people in an organisation to think in similar terms about the purpose of the business and what they individually must do to accomplish that purpose.

Put another way, the successful leader must get everyone to share the same specific mindsets.

Transitioning through change, rather than succumbing to it, requires all employees to maintain a genuine, authentic interest in continual improvement.

Efforts to challenge and change mindsets that pay off improve confidence, inspire, excite and build pride and corporate performance and profitability.

Performance psychology experts agree that sustainable, resilient, high energy motivation is best achieved through intrinsic sources. In other words, motivation is best when it comes from within. In practice, leaders can develop intrinsic motivation in their people by:

- Succinctly communicating a clearly defined goal
- Making it clear what is required to produce the desired output
- Helping employees break bigger goals down into smaller more manageable parts
- Looking at what difficulties or challenges are being repeated and deal with them, once and for all
- Helping employees to focus their energy on excellence in execution
- Rewarding, recognising and celebrating effort throughout the journey

### **And motivate by:**

- Being positive
- Being passionate
- Being prepared
- Communicating
- Sharing
- Dispelling fear
- Promoting confidence
- Managing expectations
- Setting high standards
- Making a game plan
- Holding your nerve under pressure
- Ensuring set-backs don't damage self-belief

By taking these actions, a leader can put in motion the powerful mindset of continuous renewal so it becomes a self-sustaining engine for innovation and better ideas.

**Actively demonstrate a genuine passion that inspires your employees by developing story telling skills and talking through what is needed to produce a certain result – not just about goals or targets.**

Rialto specialises in unique change management and transformation solutions which deliver exceptional results. We provide a range of services and interventions associated with the entire people agenda

**Our services include:**

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