

Thriving Through Change: Mindsets for the Future of Work

BY JESSICA SWENSON | MARCH 10, 2026



People & HR / Sponsor Spotlight

"Regardless of what kind of change processes you have in place, an organization's culture needs the right mindset for change in order for any of them to be effective," said Carissa Romero, PhD, the co-founder of [Paradigm](#). "Specifically, an organization needs a mindset focused on learning, innovation and growth, known in research as a growth mindset."

In a thought leadership spotlight at [From Day One's February virtual conference](#), Romero discussed how companies can embrace a growth mindset to improve their ability to adapt, perform, and thrive during rapid change.

The "change muscle" of an organization, as Romero calls it, represents how people feel about change and how that influences employee engagement and productivity. This can be a broader reflection of the company's readiness to learn, adapt, and thrive through uncertainty.

In today's business environment, with ongoing economic shifts, multigenerational workforces, and rapid AI adoption reshaping how work is done, the pace and volume of change is not likely to slow down. Romero says that this reality "forces [talent and culture leaders] to reexamine two things: the type of talent and the type of culture that is going to enable high performance."

Referencing a [World Economic Forum report](#) on key workforce skills, Romero says the abilities to adapt and to leverage interpersonal and leadership skills are increasingly critical as companies globalize and become more diverse. Capabilities like resilience, flexibility, agility, empathy, social influence, and active listening ensure that people can adapt and collaborate during ongoing shifts in the workplace.

Even more important than individual skills, says Romero, is organizational culture. This is where a growth mindset comes in—embedding this mindset into an organization helps employees learn and embody "the belief that change is possible, the idea that people, teams, and organizations can adapt and get better." She cited research from the 1980s and 1990s showing that "when people approach work with a growth mindset, they perform better."



Carissa Romero, co-founder of Paradigm, led the session (company photo)

This happens because rather than focusing on proving themselves, she says, people with this mindset tend to focus on continuous learning. They see challenge and change as "essential parts of the learning process" rather than signs of failure or inability.

Early mindset research assumed that a person's mindset was an internal trait that they carried with them; it influenced their approach to work across environments and organizations. More recent research challenges that assumption by showing that workplace culture can influence the individual's mindset. "I think the fact that cultures bring out these mindsets is really good news for organizations," said Romero, "because that means the goal is not to identify every single individual's mindset and try to shift them to be more growth or to try to hire a bunch of growth mindset folks. The goal is to really then create an environment that helps people show up and lead with that growth mindset."

When employees know that their leaders believe people can improve and grow, it gives them a sense of psychological safety that promotes innovation, collaboration, and experimentation, driving learning and long-term performance. "Companies that are able to successfully shift their culture to be a bit more growth-oriented, you are going to see more of these benefits unlocked."

leaders who exhibit humility about their challenges or mistakes can help employees be more open to risk-taking and experimentation.

Next, reinforce growth behaviors like new decision strategies, learning processes, research, or experimentation through feedback and recognition. She shared the story of an oil rig experiencing significant financial loss and safety incidents. Leaders sought a shift from a culture of machismo to one where employees could admit and learn from their mistakes.

"What they did is start giving out rewards and celebrating really big failures," she said. This change in culture led to an 84% decline in accident rates while increasing productivity, efficiency, and reliability. "Adapting to failure is not something that happens despite high performance. It is actually a critical driver of being able to innovate and achieve high performance."

Effective mentorship is another key approach. "What do the best mentors do differently than everyone else? They do two things simultaneously. They set very high standards because they believe it is possible for people to meet those standards, but they give people the support to actually meet those standards."

By setting high expectations, even in times of rapid change, and then offering coaching and resources that help people meet those expectations, you provide tangible support that "can help teams see challenges not as risks to avoid, but really as opportunities to grow."

Lastly, to create a culture of continuous learning, shift beyond training programs and skill-building to system-level change. This type of change "happens when organizations pair growth-oriented leadership behaviors with the right infrastructure."

By building environments where culture, leadership, and systems work together to reinforce growth mindset behaviors, companies can boost their organizational resiliency and give employees the freedom to grow through innovation and collaboration.

Editor's note: From Day One thanks our partner, [Paradigm](#), for sponsoring this thought leadership spotlight.

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