

FUTURE FOCUS MINDSET

A MULTI-YEAR STUDY AIMED AT BUILDING FUTURE-READY LEADERS, TEAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



uture Focus is a research-based system

for creating mindset change to support the development of future-ready leaders, teams, and organizations.

The mindset research summarized in this report is the first of its kind to help leaders understand and develop employees' mindsets for unlocking change, innovation, and agility. Mindset change and mindset development systems are a "must-have" for creating future-ready leadership teams and a future-ready workforce.

Future Focus was developed by Dr. Chris Groscurth, author of *Future-Ready Leadership: Strategies for the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. It represents a multi-year research effort involving thousands of leaders from dozens of industries, representing 10 countries.

This whitepaper summarizes the conceptual foundation of Future Focus, and presents empirical data which demonstrate how rare future-minded talent is in your organization.

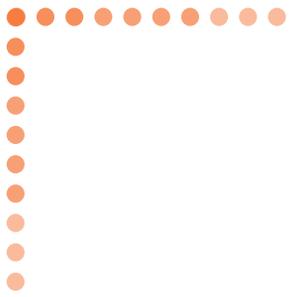
The insights and tools discussed in this report provide business and HR leaders with valuable insights and analytics for positively influencing leadership and employee behavior in the face of rapid change. The findings from this report are required reading for leadership coaches to better help their clients prepare themselves and their organization for fourth industrial revolution change.

If your organization is pursuing a digital strategy for navigating fourth industrial revolution volatility and uncertainty, this report will help accelerate and sustain your future of work strategy.

KEY FINDINGS

- Futurists are the most forward-looking mindset, and they are the hardest to find (2.5%).
- The majority of people (68% in our study) are more prone to "wait and see" in the face of the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) dynamics of today's business world.
- Only 15% of participants in this study are true Innovators.
- About 14.5% of leaders people bring significant risk aversion to future-minded change.

Building organizations of the future will require leaders to master these five future-focused mindsets. This report provides insight and tools for helping leaders identify and change mindsets to help them shape the future of their organization amidst fourth industrial revolution changes.



INTRODUCTION

The future of work is now. Humans are

living and working in the age of self-driving cars, artificial intelligence, and robotics. These fourth industrial revolution mega trends are transforming the ways in which organizations operate and how people live their lives.

The economic and workplace transformations that are beginning to take place will change how work gets done, how teams work together, and how leaders lead. The new rules for the digital age will require leaders and teams to engage in deep thinking, rapid innovation, and smarter collaboration.

Given these changes, Dr. Groscurth and his colleagues anticipate that *building the organization of the future* will require leaders to adapt and evolve their mindset—or mental filter. Leading in a smart, connected world will require better understanding of one's relationship to things like rapid innovation, risk tolerance, shared power, decision-rights, coaching and developing others, etc. The mindset of future-ready organizations is not common in organizations today, and leaders don't have the self-awareness or language for discussing how to build the organization of the future.

In fact, a recent study of 10,400 executives, conducted by Deloitte, found that **“building the organization of the future”** is the single-most important problem on the minds of executives.

According to Deloitte, 9 out of 10 leaders rated **building the organization of the future** as “important” or “very important.” Surprisingly, only **11% of leaders believe they actually understand** how to build the organization of the future. This is a shocking discovery and it suggests that leaders simply aren't ready to build or lead smart, connected organizations.

This is our challenge: We must help leaders prepare for the future from the inside out, starting with their mindset. Raising awareness about how our mindsets shape our behavior and teamwork is the key to developing tomorrow's future-ready leaders, teams, and organizations.

Our research reveals that building the organization of the future requires three essential elements:

- 1) a digital operating model
- 2) effective organizational design and,
- 3) future-ready leaders and teams.

These elements allow organizations to move faster, adapt more quickly, learn more rapidly, and embrace risk and innovation in new ways.

Therefore, leaders have a choice: master the power of mindset or leave the future to chance. Fortunately for leaders and their teams, the world's first tool for measuring and mastering the power of mindsets is here!

This report is designed to help you achieve three goals:

- Develop a **foundational understanding** of what mindsets are, and why they matter for developing future-ready leaders.
- Build knowledge about the **five types of future-focused mindsets** that exist in organizations;
- Take the **first steps toward preparing** your team and organization for the future by leveraging the Future Focus Mindset System.

Defining Mindset

Our **mindset** is our mental filter, which shapes how we think, feel, and act. Mindsets are made up of a collection of our ideas, past experiences, emotions, and some of our innate views that we have about ourselves and the world in which we live and work.

While our mindsets are shaped, in part, by our deep beliefs, values, and personality, they are less rigid and less durable than our deepest held beliefs, values, and personality. This lack of durability means that mindsets can be changed with the right methods and techniques.

The figure to the right illustrates common psychological constructs like “values” and “emotions” in terms of their *durability*. By durability, we are referring to the relative permanence or stability of these constructs.

Figure 1: Durability of Psychological Constructs



As you can see, mindsets have a moderate amount of durability. This means that with the right kind of attention and intention, our mindsets can evolve and be productively transformed to support our performance in work and life.

Mindset research assumes that human beings are incredibly resilient and adaptable to change, if we have the right data and approach to changing our mindset.

“Mindset” is a word that is becoming increasingly popular in the world of business and human resources (HR). But what most leaders don’t realize is that there has been very little research done on *specific* mindset types that impact how people do their work, collaborate, and approach business challenges. But the existing research that does exist is promising. If mindsets sound like the next big trend in human and organizational development, it’s because they are! Welcome to the future.

Mindsets are the Future of Team Development

Prior to this multi-year Future-Focus mindset initiative, very few practical tools were available to measure mindsets at work. Future Focus is the world’s first mindset system for building future-ready teams.

Future Focus provides deep insight into a person’s time-orientation (i.e., to the past, present, and future). This powerful tool pinpoints a person’s dominant mindset about how they approach risk, uncertainty, growth, change, and innovation.

The logic being Future Focus is simple: If we know how other people think, feel, and act toward the future, then we can more effectively collaborate, innovate, and engage with one another to build shared futures at work and in life. This knowledge requires sound measurement and skills for helping others leverage their mindset for improved performance. This is where mindset coaching and team discovery workshops come into play.

For example, if you are my leader and you know how I think about the future, then you can predict how I will process information, communicate, and behave. With this information about my mindset orientation, you can more effectively tailor how you communicate with me about changes that will impact my work, how you set and manage expectations with me, and how you coach me. In addition, you’ll have a better understanding of why, perhaps, we approach risk, change, and innovation differently.

Similarly, if I know how you think, feel, and behave as a manager or leader, then I can better predict how you will react to my suggestions for improvement and innovation. It will help me make sense of your behavior. For instance, what I might perceive as your lack of support, might simply be your strong desire for certainty or your intolerance of ambiguity. These powerful insights will allow us to speak directly to these issues and improve our **partnership, teamwork, and shared success**.

And finally, as a team, if we share a common understanding and vocabulary for discussing changes that will impact our team’s ability to innovate, collaborate, prioritize, and communicate, then we will be more effective in implementing strategies that prepare our workgroup, and our organization, for changes that are beyond our control. With this shared understanding, we can become more effective in taking action around the things that we can control to build a shared future together, improving our organization’s overall efficiency and effectiveness.

How Future Focus® Helps Leaders Improve Team Performance

When our relationship is built on an understanding of how one another views the past, present, and future, then we both have a better chance of getting what we want from our relationship. We increase our odds of creating a mutually beneficial “shared future.”

What’s more, when teams of people coordinate and collaborate with this valuable information about each other’s mindset, then the organizations that they work for are more likely to get the productivity and performance out of their staff and workforce that the organization needs to thrive.

Once you know your dominant Future Focus Mindset, you can start improving your relationships with leaders, peers, and direct reports to prepare your organization for unforeseen workplace disruptions—whether those disruptors include AI, robotics, a global pandemic, or simply a change in organizational structure or technology applications.

Future Focus is designed to be a fast, reliable, and useful tool to help leaders improve their individual, team, and organization’s performance.

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future.”

John F. Kennedy

Leaders can use Future Focus insights to:

- **Pinpoint** where their most future-focused leaders and teams work in their organization;
- **Build** more agile teams
- **Coach** and mentor future leaders with greater insight and precision
- **Engage** their workforce through future-focused conversations
- **Accelerate** change in building the organization of the future
- **Manage** change and innovation initiatives with with greater focus and less stress, and
- **Plan** around future leadership scenarios (succession, changing workforce demographics, etc.) with depth of insight and predictive power.

These valuable applications of Future Focus Mindsets have tremendous value in helping leaders and HR teams overcome some of the most common barriers to strategy implementation, resistance to change, and low performance.

Applied Mindset Research: The Basics

Perhaps the most well-known mindset research that has been conducted is on what is referred to as the “Growth Mindset.” The growth mindset stems from the work of Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck. In her book, *Mindset: The new psychology of success*¹, Dweck describes the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset.

According to Dweck, people who have a growth mindset love learning new things. They view mistakes as a learning opportunity and they don’t fear making mistakes. People with a growth mindset see intelligence and talent as things that people can develop over time, not fixed quantities that a person is either born with or not.

On the other hand, people with a fixed mindset see traits, like their “strengths,” as etched in stone or fixed. The fixed mindset views things in black and white terms. People either are a certain way or they are not. For example, a child with a fixed mindset might say, “I’m just not good at math.”

Now compare this with a child with a growth mindset. When faced with a new challenge, the growth mindset child would say, “I just haven’t learned how to do this kind of math problem yet.” The difference is subtle, but the implications are huge. Research has shown that the growth mindset drives behaviors such as persistence, resilience after setbacks, learning, and even life success.

On the other hand, people with a fixed mindset worry about the adequacy of their traits.

They’re more cautious and can be self-conscious about their abilities. Fixed mindset leaders may be less likely to try new things and take risks for fear that they will fail, confirming their negative perceptions of themselves. People who lead with the fixed mindset don’t like to make mistakes, as they see mistakes as an indication of their inadequacy.

Dweck’s research on growth and fixed mindsets has focused a great deal on young adults and children. Her work has shown time and time again that growth and fixed mindsets can be accurately measured, and that there is a science to mindset change. This is good news for leaders, educators, consultants, coaches, and HR professionals who get paid to help people change their behavior. Mindset research proves that thoughts, feelings, and behavior are all interconnected, and all work together to contribute to performance and productivity.

There is no question that Dweck’s program of research has tremendously advanced our understanding of the power of mindsets. Her work on the growth mindset and how to change mindsets is the most well-documented and well-researched body of information on human mindsets. However, even Dweck hasn’t dove deeply into unlocking the applied power of mindsets for overcoming the types of challenges that leaders will face in the future of work.



¹Dweck, Carol S., 2009. New York: Random House.

Beyond the Growth and Fixed Mindsets

Researchers and practitioners have begun questioning whether there are other types of mindsets that can be measured. For example, some researchers have started to study “prevention” vs. “promotion” mindsets.

The prevention and promotion mindsets were discovered by Columbia psychologist E. Tory Higgins. Higgins’ research on regulatory focus theory explains what motivates people to achieve a goal, and how people go about achieving goals. This body of research is also important to the Future Focus study because it supports the mindset-performance connection.

According to Higgins, the promotion mindset is primarily concerned with accomplishments, hopes, and aspirations. Promotion mindsets derive pleasure from maximizing gains, and from growth and advancement. Promotion mindsets are fascinated with what could be, rather than what is.

On the other end of Higgins’ mindset spectrum is the prevention mindset. The prevention mindset is primarily concerned with safety, responsibilities, and obligations. The prevention mindset seeks pleasure from non-losses, and from avoiding pain and discomfort. In this way, the prevention mindset resembles Dweck’s fixed mindset. Prevention mindsets are responsible, protective, risk averse, and concerned with safety. Prevention Mindsets are driven to protect what is and not promoting or envisioning what could be.



The third set of mindsets that researchers and practitioners are talking about come from work out of the Arbinger Institute, a mindset consultancy. Arbinger consultants have begun exploring what they call an “outward” vs. an “inward” mindset.

People with an outward mindset focus on external realities such as customers, partners, communities, and stakeholders. Whereas people with an inward mindset focus on themselves, their personal goals, and what’s best for themselves.

Arbinger’s work is important because it has introduced HR and learning and development professionals to the concept of mindsets. The Arbinger Institute, however, does not present research findings to back their claims. Thus, we don’t know how prevalent the outward and inward mindset are in the population.

Section Summary

Applied mindset research has just begun, but has tremendous potential for helping leaders prepare governments, companies, and communities for the future of work and life. Dr. Groscurth’s mindset initiative is intended to advance mindset science and organizational application.

A New Mindset for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

In 2016, Dr. Chris Groscurth and his colleagues launched the beta version of Future Focus, an open access assessment designed to help leaders identify their dominant mindset about the future.

This assessment sorts leaders into one of five Future Focus mindset types called: *Futurist*, *Innovator*, *Opportunist*, *Observer*, and *Historian*. All humans, depending on context, demonstrate characteristics of all five of these mindsets, therefore, these mindsets can change over time. Our dominant mindset can also change from one context to the next.

The Future Focus Mindset Initiative (FFMI) was launched with a very specific purpose: *to help humanity prepare for the future of work and life*.

Dr. Chris Groscurth, founder and chair of the FFMI, posed a simple but provocative question that launched an entirely new program of research on human mindsets for the future of work and life. “How can knowing a human’s mindset about the future help them succeed in work and in life?”

This simple question has guided the FFMI’s ground-breaking research to quantify the mindsets that drive personal, team, and organizational growth in the digital age. The drivers of growth in the digital age include innovation, agility, ethical decision-making, learning and development, and human-to-human, as well as human-to-machine collaboration.

“Our purpose is to help humanity prepare for the future of work and life.”

Chris Groscurth, Ph.D.

Author of *Future-Ready Leadership* and Chair of the Future Focus Mindset Initiative

Early adopters of FFMI research findings and mindset change tools include businesses, governments, and educational institutions. In partnership with these early adopters, the FFMI has learned a great deal about how to help leaders, teams, and organizations adapt and evolve to disruptive changes that are impacting organizations and communities around the world (e.g., artificial intelligence, robotics, biomedical engineering, and automation).

Perhaps the most important discovery to date from the FFMI research, is prevalence of each of the five Future Focus Mindsets in the study sample.

The following sections will introduce each of the five Future Focus Mindsets, and outline the FFMI research findings.

MEET THE MINDSETS OF THE FUTURE

Human behavior is diverse, but also

predictable. At the outset of the FFMI, Dr. Groscurth, in partnership with other mindset experts and psychology professionals, hypothesized that peoples' mindsets about the future likely followed a normal distribution or a Gaussian curve. Based on this prediction, one would expect people's future-focused orientation, and related behaviors, to range from a strong historical and prevention orientation to a strong futuristic and promotion orientation (see prevention and promotion characteristics in previous section). Therefore, in order to be measurable, teachable, and coachable, the beta version of Future Focus would need to describe different "types" of mindsets.

The existence of more than two opposite types of mindsets (e.g., growth-fixed, prevention-promotion, and inward-outward), however, **flew in the face of conventional thinking** about mindsets.

Dr. Groscurth's important discovery showed that there was a fundamental flaw in existing mindset research: other mindset approaches fail to account for the full spectrum of human mindset diversity, particularly those "in the middle" of the bell curve (e.g., Gottfredson, 2020).

Simply describing people's mindset in either/or terms (e.g., either growth or fixed) limits the practical value of analyzing and helping people develop and change their mindset across the spectrum. When we approach mindsets across the spectrum of diversity that define how each human being perceives and behaves based on their past experiences, present circumstances, and desired future, distilling a human's mindset down to a simple "either-or" proposition seems overly simplistic and developmentally restrictive. As such, leadership should approach "either/or" mindset assessments with caution and skepticism. What diversity exists between these two extremes that might be holding your team back?

Solving the Mindset Spectrum Mystery

To test his theory of mindset distribution, Dr. Groscurth developed five Future Focus Mindsets. To develop the five Future Focus Mindsets, Groscurth turned to existing research on innovation, social change, communication, and technology. He also conducted workshops with thousands of leaders.

Groscurth's doctoral, masters, and undergraduate training were in the field of human communication studies, so naturally he turned to his own discipline to solve for the limitations of psychological research.

In addition, Groscurth had worked for nearly 20 as a leadership and organizational effectiveness advisor, and was a former Gallup subject matter expert, certified in such tools as the Clifton StrengthsFinder® and the Q12® employee engagement survey.

²Gottfredson, R. 2020. Morgan James Publishing.

In developing the five Future Focus Mindsets, Groscurth remembered being inspired by a theory of innovation that he studied as an undergraduate student at Western Michigan University. The theory was called “Diffusion of Innovations.” This theory was first published by a communication studies scholar, Dr. Everett Rogers, in 1962. Diffusion of Innovations theory has greatly informed how we study mass adoption of technological change across society.

For many years, Groscurth taught this theory to his students at Western Michigan University, the University of Georgia, and the University of Michigan. Groscurth also incorporated Diffusion of Innovations concepts into his consulting and coaching with clients interested in change adoption and organizational innovation.

Measuring more than two opposing types of mindsets (e.g., growth-fixed, prevention-promotion, and inward-outward), however, **flew in the face of conventional thinking** about mindsets. What Groscurth had discovered was that there was a fundamental flaw in existing mindset research: earlier mindset approaches fail to account for the full spectrum of human mindsets, particularly those “in the middle” of the bell curve.

According to Diffusion of Innovations theory, there are four main factors that influence the spread of a new idea. These factors are summarized in Figure 2.

The *movement* and progress of innovations brought on by technological advancement, relies heavily on people (human behavior) within the social system. How quickly an innovation spreads is, in part, dependent upon peoples’ mindset about the idea, how they respond to uncertainty about the future, their tolerance for risk, and how they communicate about new ideas, etc.

Figure 2: Four Factors that Influence Innovation Adoption

1. The innovation
2. The communication channels
3. Time (i.e., past, present, future)
4. Characteristics of the social system (note: this is where mindsets live!)

Diffusion of Innovations research reveals that there are five types of innovation adopters within a social system. Moreover, the adoption behavior of these five groups follow a “bell curve” and exist in predictable proportions across diverse settings. These groups and proportions are summarized the data table below.

Type of Adopter	% of the Population
Innovators	2.5%
Early Adopters	13.5%
Early Majority	34%
Late Majority	34%
Laggards	16%

Building on the work of Diffusion of Innovations research, Dr. Groscurth developed a set of assumptions about the type of mindset that the different groups of innovation adopters might have.

For example, the early majority might view the risk of new innovations from a “wait and see” perspective. They might only adopt a new innovation (e.g., buying the latest iPhone) if they see significant gains that offset the cost of investing in a new device. Similarly, Laggards might be the most risk averse or resistant to change and innovation. They might long for the way things were in the past, choosing to preserve what is, rather than lean into what could be. Sound familiar? It should because the Laggards’ mindset bears a striking resemblance to Higgins’ prevention focus.

By fusing insights from existing mindset research and Diffusion of Innovations adoption behavior, Groscurth **developed an entirely new way of looking at human mindsets** across a diverse spectrum of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Groscurth’s research led to five types of Future Focus Mindsets called: **Historian**, **Observer**, **Opportunist**, **Innovator**, and **Futurist**. The five Future Focus Mindsets are each depicted by a representative icon in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The Five Future Focus Mindsets



Historians are symbolized by the wise owl because they are rich in experience and keepers of the wisdom of the past and have a low risk tolerance.

Observers are symbolized by an eye because they are keen to spot unfolding trends and take a “watch and see” attitude.

Opportunists are symbolized by a cresting wave because they are always looking to get on-board with the next big opportunity—provided others go first and prove that the tides ahead are safe and navigable.

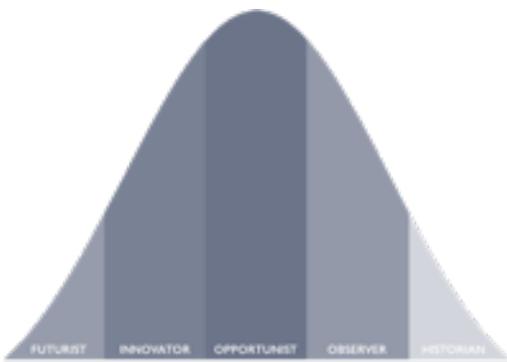
Innovators are symbolized by the light bulb because they are eager to build something new for the future. They’re creative, but also highly pragmatic.

Futurists are symbolized by the binoculars because they can see far onto the future horizon. They are sensitive to signals about what will be and have the lowest risk tolerance.

As with the different types of innovation adopters, the Future Focus Mindsets can be described along a continuum relative to their hypothesized proportions within a social system.

Figure 4 illustrates the five Future Focus Mindsets relative to Dr. Groscurth's original hypothesis about how prevalent these mindsets were in organizations and society.

Figure 4: The Future Focus Mindset Spectrum



The five Future Focus Mindsets provide leaders with a practical and more precise mindset typology for assessing and developing leaders, teams, and organizations. This framework also allows for a more pointed discussion about how to leverage the diversity of mindsets within a team or organization. And, most importantly, the Future Focus Mindsets, when integrated into a future-shaping operating strategy, empower leaders to start having serious, data-driven, conversations about building a future-ready organization or community to maximize growth, innovation, and prosperity for humankind.

Figure 4 is also useful for clarifying the assumptions and propositions that define FFMI research and practical applications like team assessment, discovery workshops, agile transformation, talent management, and organizational effectiveness and strategic planning processes.

Proposition 1: Futurists are the rarest type of mindset in a social system.

Proposition 2: Historians and Futurists are opposite mindset types and the rarest mindsets within a social system.

Proposition 3: Innovators and Futurists have the strongest orientation toward the future and risk tolerance.

Proposition 4: Observers and Historians have the strongest orientation toward the past and lowest risk tolerance.

Proposition 5: Opportunists have the strongest orientation toward the present, and are the most frequently occurring mindset in a social system.

Using these propositions, the FFMI sought to further define what it means to operate with one of the five Future Focus Mindsets. These descriptions are included in the following pages.

In addition, the FFMI embarked on a global study to test the propositions by gathering data from people who were studying human and organizational behavior and/or who were actively leading conversations about the future of work and what it means for leaders, organizations, teams, employees, etc.



FUTURIST

What it means to be a Futurist

Futurists are the most future-focused leaders on the Future Focus Leadership Spectrum. Futurists have a keen sense of what the future looks like, and what trends will unfold. They're dreamers and visionaries.

Many Futurists have a strong sense of intuition or a "gut" feeling about what the future holds. Others rely on past data, historical patterns, or predictive analytics to forecast what's to come.

Futurist leaders have a high tolerance for risk. Futurist leaders think less about how things are and more about how things could be.

Futurists have a gift for casting futuristic visions that inspire others who may have trouble seeing what the future holds.

Futurists often muse about the future and are usually early adopters of the latest technologies and trends. This group of forward-thinking, risk-takers are rare relative to Innovators, Opportunists, Observers, and Historians.

Based on Diffusion of Innovation estimates, it was originally predicted that Futurists make up less than 2.5% of the Future Focus Leadership Spectrum.



INNOVATOR

What it means to be an Innovator

Innovators are highly future-focused leaders. Innovators are smart and creative people. They are designers, builders, entrepreneurs, and inventors.

Innovators have a strong vision for what the future holds and are among the first to turn their vision into a reality.

Like Futurists, Innovators have a high tolerance for risk. However, given their desire to build, adopt, and “be first to market,” they may take a more practical approach to leading than their Futurist thought partners.

Innovators may ask, “but how will that work,” not because they don’t believe a future-focused idea is possible, but because they want to understand the details well enough to help put it into motion and turn vision into a reality.

Based on Diffusion of Innovation estimates, it was originally predicted Innovators make up a less than 15% of the Future Focus Leadership Spectrum.



OPPPORTUNIST

What it means to be an Opportunist

Opportunists want to get in the game before the masses. They want to “catch the next wave” of opportunity before others do. People with this future-focused mindset adopt a “wait and see” attitude. But rest assured, they don’t want to wait too long.

Opportunists crave data, proof-of-concept, and evidence that an idea will work. Once an Opportunist is convinced that an opportunity exists, they will rally the herd and bring others along for the ride.

Opportunists are more risk averse than Innovators and Futurists, but not so much so that they want to miss out on an opportunity.

Opportunists are likely to support innovation and risk taking, but their passion is more measured and prudent.

Opportunists love tests, beta versions, and pilots. Highly analytical Opportunists want data, lots of data, in order to make an informed decision about the risks that they are willing to take.

Based on Diffusion of Innovation estimates, it was originally predicted estimated that Opportunists make up about a third (34%) of the Future Focus Leadership Spectrum.



OBSERVER

What it means to be an Observer

Observers, despite what the name suggests, are not passive about the future. Leaders with this mindset are active observers of emerging and unfolding trends. Observers enjoy watching a trend unfold.

People with an Observer mindset are risk averse and are okay with missing out being the first to market or getting in on the "ground floor" of a new growth opportunity.

Observers, unlike Opportunists, don't have to be first person to jump into something new and be among the first to benefit from a new opportunity.

Observers prefer stability, predictability, and security. They have an even stronger "wait and see" attitude than their Opportunist counterparts. This is because of their lower risk tolerance, shared with that of Historians.

What might appear to be skepticism or resistance from an Observer might actually be interest and potential support for a new initiative or innovation. But in order to win an Observer over, they will need lots of proof, understanding, and influencing. Observers want a "sure bet" and security.

Based on Diffusion of Innovation estimates, it was originally predicted that Observers make up about a third (34%) of the Future-Focus Leadership Spectrum.



HISTORIAN

What it means to be a Historian

Historians derive wisdom from past experiences and patterns. They approach the future through the lens of the past. They are the most conservative and risk averse type of future-focused leader.

Historians can be highly skeptical, and will usually have very difficult questions about feasibility, cost, and potential risks.

Some Historians may even be perceived as “anti-future” or might say things like, “Here we go again, we’ve tried this before.”

Historians bring tremendous insight and context to future-focused leadership teams. First, they ask hard questions. They often bring historical perspective and discernment that others lack, and they can help balance teams that are drawn to “bright and shiny” new ideas.

While Historians might not be your next big idea generator, they can add tremendous value in preventing disastrous decisions.

Based on Diffusion of Innovation estimates, it was originally predicted that Historians make up about 14.5% of the Future Focus Leadership Spectrum.



OUR RESULTS

RESULTS OF THE REASERCH

AFTER years of formative research and planning, Future Focus was ready to launch. The FFMI launched a beta study in August of 2016. The purpose was to test the five propositions outlined in the previous section (see pg. 16), and to estimate the prevalence of the five Future Focus Mindsets among study participants.

A 10-item version of the Future Focus mindset assessment was posted online, and participants were given the opportunity to take the open access assessment free of charge. In exchange for their time, people who completed the assessment were provided with a custom report and free educational resources for applying insights about their dominant mindset to improve their personal performance. No additional forms of compensation were used to incent participation.

The assessment uses a set of proprietary items and scoring algorithm to assess and differentiate a person's dominant mindset. Participants are given 10 separate scenarios, and asked to select the response that "BEST" describes how they would think, feel, or behave under specific circumstances. The assessment presents 50 possible response options and an exponential number of possible response combinations that participants can choose.

Given the intended use of these mindset analytics, the scenarios focus on both work and personal choices, but primarily on workplace and organizational behavior.

The user experience and interface of Future Focus are desktop and mobile optimized to provide ease of response, and real-time feedback.

Who Participated in the Study?

The four-month study attracted consultants, university students, HR professionals, Fortune 500 leaders, government, and non-profit leaders. Primarily, this sample consisted of working professionals.

Blog posts on leadership4ir.com and medium.com were used to attract a purposive sample of working professionals to take the assessment. Participants were recruited from a university campus, in-person client seminars, and across social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

In total, 245 participants logged onto the assessment within the fourth-month beta testing period. Participants who completed the assessment represented 10 counties. During this time, 233 study participants completed the entire assessment and only 12 participants (4.90%) dropped off. After cleaning the data, the final analysis consisted of 222 survey participants.

In order to ensure completion rates, demographic questions were omitted from the in-take process. Limiting the number of questions and time required to complete the assessment was a trade-off for quickly gathering an adequate sample size, which proved successful.

To overcome this limitation, studies are currently underway to analyze the impact of demographics on peoples' Future Focus Mindset within specific organizations and communities.

How hard is it to find a Futurist in your organization?

Future Focus Mindset Findings				
Futurist	Innovator	Opportunist	Observer	Historian
2.5%	15%	34%	34%	14.5%
Diffusion of Innovations Population Estimates				
Innovator	Early Adopter	Early Majority	Late Majority	Laggards
2.5%	13.5%	34%	34%	16%



Findings

As predicted, the prevalence and direction of the five Future Focus Mindsets within the sample followed the predicted Gaussian distribution. Each of the five propositions that LMI sought to test was supported by empirical evidence.

The most frequently occurring mindset in the sample was the Opportunist (34%) and Observer (34%). The least frequent mindset in the sample was the Futurist (2.5%).

Innovators (15%) were half as common as Observers and Opportunists. While Historians (14.5%) were nearly 7x as common in our sample as Futurists.

Analysis of the data show that the majority of the sample (83%) fell between the two “extreme” mindset types called Futurist and Historian. This discovery supported Dr. Groscurth’s hypothesis that previous mindset research may lack precision and utility for guiding organizational effectiveness interventions. Truly future-focused mindsets are rare. As such, organizational initiatives focused on change, innovation, or agile transformation should begin by assessing the mindsets that leaders and team members bring to the transformation as early as possible.

What’s more, these data tell a compelling story about how the study participants are likely to approach the uncertainty, risks, and opportunities of the future.

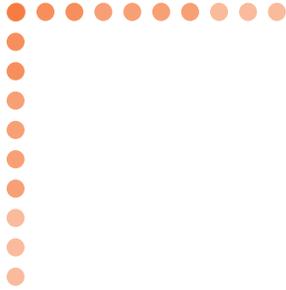
This discovery supported Dr. Groscurth’s hypothesis that previous mindset research may lack precision and utility for guiding organizational effectiveness interventions.

The data illustrate that more than 8 in 10 respondents report having a mindset about things like innovation, risk, and uncertainty that may pose challenges for easily envisioning and/or adopting future-focused organizational changes.

This study shows that **only about 1 in 10 (14%) in our sample have a truly future-focused mindset.** Futurists and Historian’s (the two extreme mindsets) are much rarer than the other three Future Focus Mindsets, accounting for less than 20% of the sample combined.

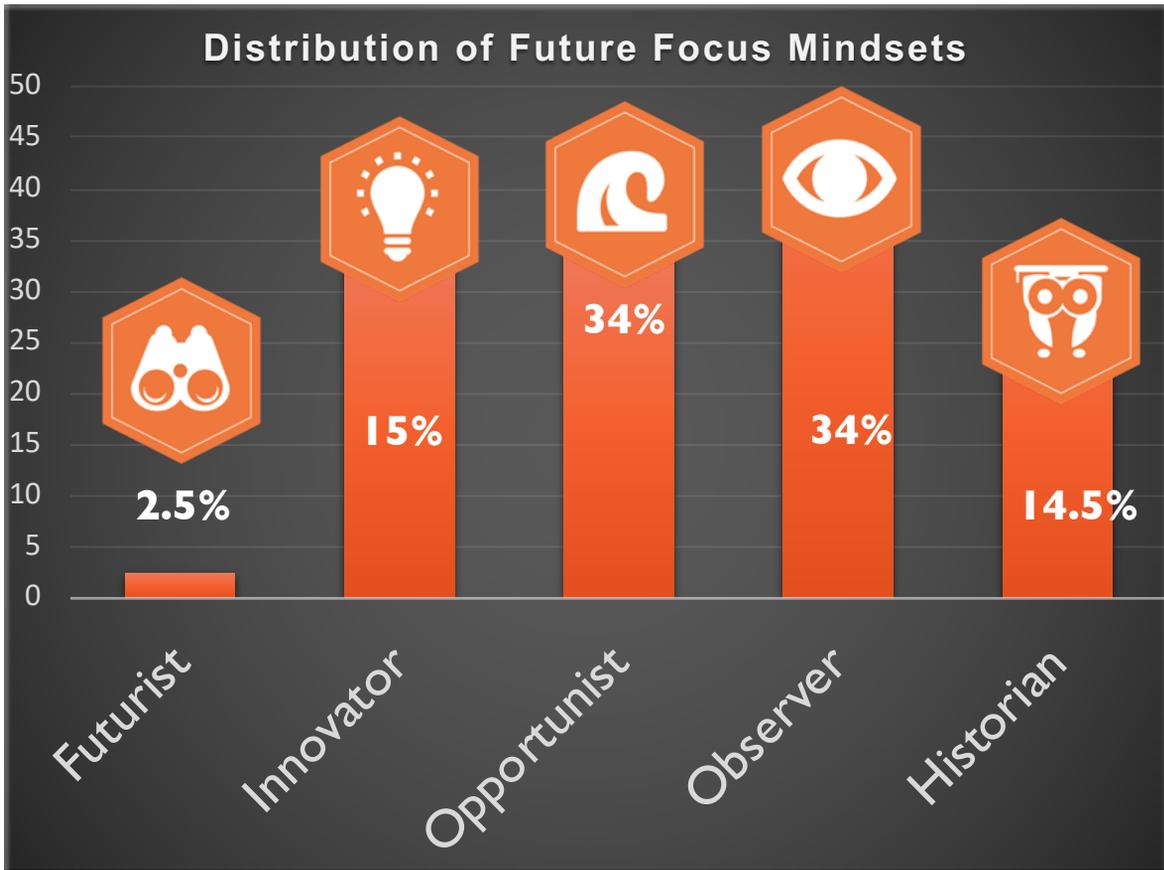
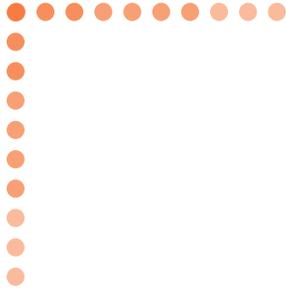
While these early findings are limited to our sample, if your organization mirrors these scientific findings, it could mean that only 1 in 10 employees or leaders have the truly visionary mindset for building the organization of the future. These findings suggest that Futurists are likely a rare minority in your organization.

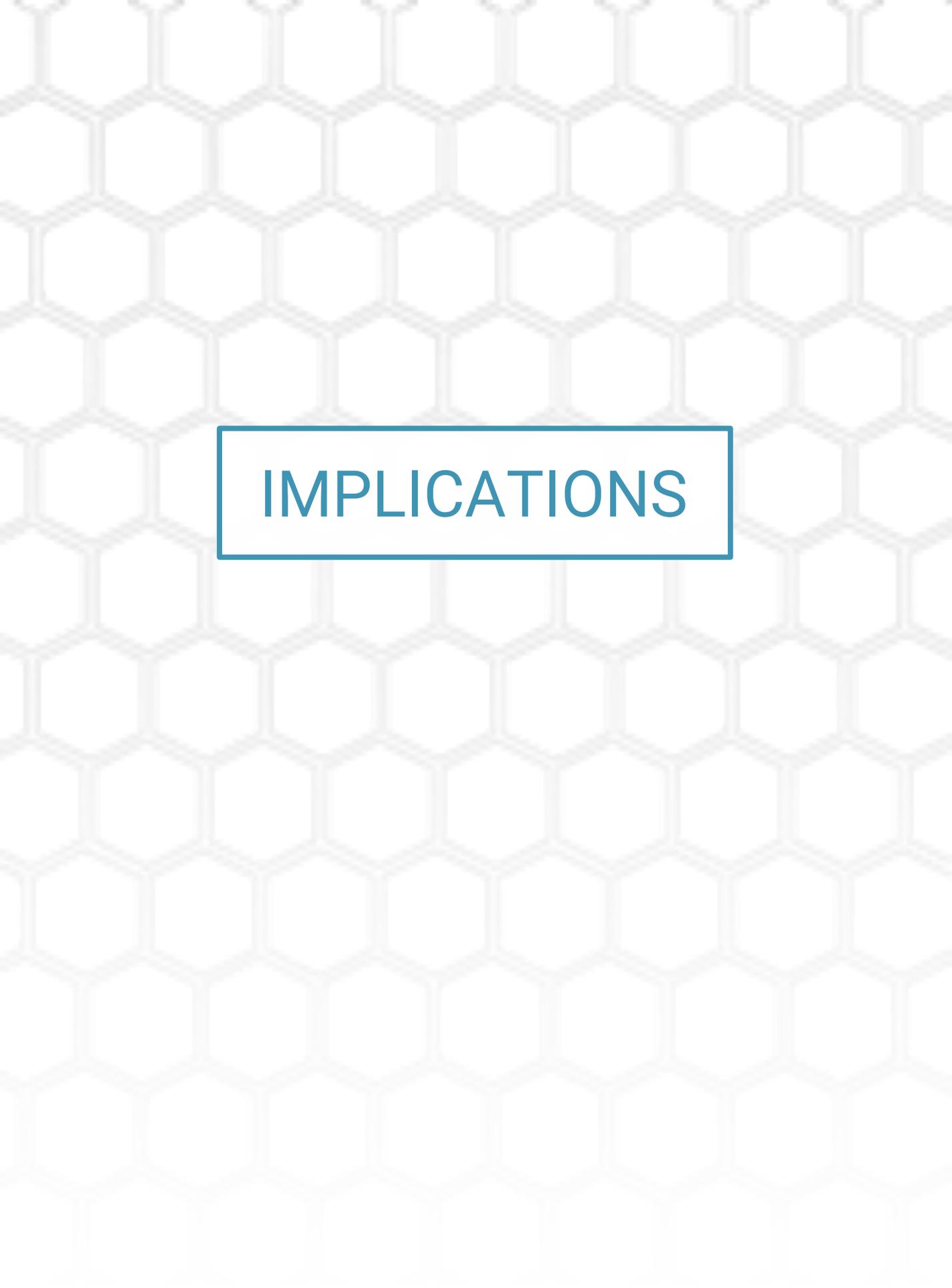
Based on these findings, FFMI research continues to deepen the predictive power of Future Focus and its application to team and organizational effectiveness.



Teamwork
Observer
MINDSET
Futurist
Collaboration
Focus
Leadership
Historian
Opportunist







IMPLICATIONS

Implications

This ground-breaking research effort is the first of its kind to prove that there is a better way to measure mindsets and to develop leaders and teams.

Mindset research must expand to include the contextual factors accounted for by Future Focus which include risk tolerance, innovation, strategic foresight, and tolerance for ambiguity.

For business leaders, coaches, and human performance consultants, this research provides data-driven support for taking mindsets seriously in planned change initiatives.

The most promising applications for Future Focus™ to date include:

- Agile Transformation
- Coaching
- Organizational Design
- Team Development
- Change Management, and
- Talent Management

Future Focus is a powerful tool for building future-ready leaders, teams, and organizations.

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--Dr. Chris Groscurth
Author | Advisor | Mindset Coach

Several strategies have been used to leverage Future Focus in planned changed initiatives, which include:

- Education and micro-learning
- Organizational Assessment
- Team Assessment and Workshops
- Coaching Certification
- Executive & Leadership Development

To learn more about building future-ready leaders, teams, and organizations, working with Dr. Chris Groscurth, or the work of the FFMI, please visit <https://Leadership4iR.com> or email Dr. Groscurth at Chris@Leadership4iR.com

COURSES, COACHING AND CERTIFICATION

Learn more about courses, coaching, and certifications that leverage the power of Future Focus Mindsets at Leadership4iR.com



Chris Groscurth, Ph.D. is Author of *Future-Ready Leadership: Strategies for the Fourth Industrial Revolution* and Creator of the Future Focus Mindset Assessment.

Over the past 20 years Chris has been researching, teaching, coaching and advising leaders on how to build future-ready organizations. He has held research and leadership positions at Gallup, the University of Michigan and currently serves as a global learning design and development executive for a Fortune 500 organization. He blogs at Leadership4iR.com and is founding chair of the *Future Focus Leadership Academy*.

