

# The Role of the CEO Is Changing: Here's How You Can Prepare

9 min read



## Key Takeaways

- **How Does Mindfulness Fit Into Business Leadership?** Improving your control of and the function of your body's nervous system and brain to upgrade your hardware for overall better system performance.
- **How You Can Become a Better Leader Through Mindfulness** "Increased Productivity A stronger prefrontal cortex improves the executive function of your brain and your ability to perform as the chief executive officer of your company.
- **What Does a Business Leader's Mindfulness Practice Look Like?** Giving everyone the ability to practice mindfulness will empower every employee with the opportunity to reduce their stress, improve their creativity, become healthier, and increase their productivity.

When you think about the average CEO's mindset, you probably picture someone driven, creative, and insightful who never stops and has access to seemingly endless stores of energy.

While this model CEO might be the stereotypical picture we all see in our mind's eye and subsequently, strive toward, we're here to talk about the other side of the coin.

This might not be the healthiest or most successful mindset for a CEO to have. The reason why?

A CEO who never stops or never slows down, a CEO that essentially never takes a break from being a CEO is also tired, stressed, overworked, constantly pulled in multiple directions, and likely missing out on the opportunity to adopt a CEO mindset that enhances performance and reduces stress while improving leadership, too.

No matter what type of business leader you are, you can improve your leadership skills with the **powerful mindset shift** that comes with adopting a mindfulness practice.

## What Is Mindfulness?

By definition, mindfulness is the practice of being intentionally aware of a specific activity, pattern of thought, or focus. <sup>[1]</sup>

You can be mindful simply by learning to center your focus on the present moment and whatever activity or lack of activity you are performing in it.

While practicing mindfulness, one should be aware of their thoughts and feelings and be able to acknowledge them without passing judgment on them.

## How Does Mindfulness Fit Into Business Leadership?

When we think about meditation, a practice that's millennia old, you might not immediately pair it with business leadership and the modern workplace. But the principle of meditation and practicing mindfulness in the workplace isn't necessarily to reach a higher spiritual plane or to achieve nirvana.

Instead, the goal of mindfulness in the workplace is centered around improving your control of and the function of your body's nervous system and brain to upgrade your hardware for overall better system performance.

## **How You Can Become a Better Leader Through Mindfulness**

A regular mindfulness practice can offer you several proven benefits that will help you become a better leader <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **Reduced Stress and Anxiety**

If there's one thing that every CEO has enough of, it's stress. No matter how many problems you solve and fires you put out each day, you can count on finding a fresh crop of challenges waiting for you the next day.

Meditation has been shown to help reduce stress, depression, and anxiety <sup>[3]</sup>, and practicing meditation is a simple way to lower your level of anxiety — without having to actually solve any problems or reduce the number/degree of challenges you face.

The exact mechanism of how meditation reduces these negative feelings is not fully understood. Meditation might reduce anxiety as a result of the physiological effects of deep breathing, through the practice of focusing on the present, or the re-framing of your perspective that can occur during practice – perhaps, shifting the way you see problems from negative issues to opportunities for problem-solving – there's no denying that meditation works.

**Read More:** [How Productive Business Leaders Spend Their Time](#)

Not only has mindfulness meditation been associated with lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, but the mini-breaks needed for practicing mindfulness can help you avoid burnout.

Even if you only pause for five or ten minutes each day for your meditation practice, the nature and quality of the break will leave you feeling truly refreshed.

## Improved Physical Health

Although the body and mind can sometimes seem like separate entities, they're intricately connected and affect each other in ways we do not yet fully understand. Through this powerful mind-body connection, meditation has been shown to have several physical health benefits <sup>[4]</sup>.

From lowering blood pressure and helping with chronic pain to possibly strengthening the immune system <sup>[5]</sup>, the physical benefits of meditation will help you feel better on the job. Plus, these added health benefits could actually reduce the number of days you miss or are less productive due to illness.

## Improved Focus, Concentration, and Memory

According to research from Harvard, the human mind spends nearly 47% of waking hours wandering aimlessly, without control. Most of this time is spent thinking about the past and the future, rather than focused on the present moment <sup>[6]</sup>.

Unfortunately, all this worry over things we can't control – the past and the future – results in us missing out on the opportunities that are right in front of us and very much in our control – the present. As a result, people generally miss out on their potential for focusing on the present, actively forming strong memories of the present, and concentrating on the problems/opportunities that exist in the here and now.

Practicing mindfulness, for even a few minutes each day, will help you retrain your brain to stop wandering aimlessly through the could've, would've, should've, and what-ifs of your

life so that your brain can be free to concentrate on the more important issues occurring in the present.

In addition to improving your focus, concentration, and memory, this mindful participation in the present will also help you reduce your daily stress load. As a result, you'll be less mired in worrying about the future, dwelling on the past, and experiencing negative emotions to be better able to address the day's tasks that are immediately before you, making you a more effective leader.

## Increased Productivity

Practicing meditation strengthens the brain's prefrontal cortex <sup>[7]</sup>, the center of the brain that's responsible for executive function. In other words, the prefrontal cortex is kind of like the CEO of your brain. It's responsible for judgment, planning, self-discipline, decision-making, focus, and behavior control.

A stronger prefrontal cortex improves the executive function of your brain and your ability to perform as the chief executive officer of your company. It simplifies the act of making good decisions, planning, and doing the work that needs to be done by more easily overcoming the evolutionarily-rooted impulse to procrastinate and save energy.

As a result, you're always ready to jump the hurdles that pop up in front of you as you become more productive and more effective at your job.

## Increased Self-Awareness and Improved Relationships

Meditation naturally increases one's self-awareness. Through the practice, you become increasingly aware of your own thoughts, feelings, and actions and the motivations, reasons, and catalysts behind them. As a result, you become more aware of your own successes and mistakes as a business leader.

**Read More:** [The Most Common Mistakes As A Business Leader](#)

In turn, you also become increasingly aware of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of those with whom you interact each day.

As a result of the improved understanding of yourself and others, your understanding and perception of the dynamics at play within all of your interpersonal relationships at work and outside of the office become increasingly clear, too.

This will help you foster better workplace relationships, more positive interactions at the workplace, and increased productivity in your people.

As you manage your business and employees on a daily basis, you'll gain increasing respect as a leader, strengthen bonds and loyalty, and enjoy more productive relationships with your employees <sup>[8]</sup>.

### **Tap Your Potential for Creativity, Insight, and Innovation**

With its ability to help you clear your mind of cluttered, unproductive thoughts, mindfulness sets the stage for learning and creativity, thereby improving your insightfulness and ability to innovate <sup>[9]</sup>.

As a result, practicing mindfulness has the power to transform you into a better business leader through newly strengthened business acumen. You'll find yourself generating better ideas, solving problems more quickly, garnishing more useful lessons from past mistakes, more readily identifying patterns in your business behavior, and finding innovative ways to lead your business into the future.

## **Spread Positivity Through Mindfulness for a Better Workplace**

When you adopt a mindfulness practice and improve your leadership skills, CEO mindset, and management style, you will also set a better example for your entire organization.

**Read More:** [Maximize Your Business Profit With High-Performing Teams](#)

In fact, once you begin to experience the benefits of mindfulness, you might even decide to promote it as a part of your workplace culture. When you introduce mindfulness into your workplace, you'll undoubtedly create more productive teams.

Giving everyone the ability to practice mindfulness will empower every employee with the opportunity to reduce their stress, improve their creativity, become healthier, and increase their productivity.

## What Does a Business Leader's Mindfulness Practice Look Like?

Starting a mindfulness meditation practice doesn't have to be a huge commitment. In fact, most experts recommend starting small by aiming for just five minutes of practice when you start and slowly working your way up to ten.

Mindfulness meditation also doesn't mean you have to take an immediate liking to singing bowls and burning incense in the office; there are several methods to the madness (oops — we mean sanity) of meditation.

- **Guided Meditation** - You can download an app or do a quick search on YouTube for a guided meditation that will lead you through a few minutes of centering your mind.
- **Active Meditation** - Go for a walk, run, swim, or sign up for a yoga class and practice focusing your mind on only your body's movements, feeling every stride and breath you take.
- **Circular Breathing** - Focus your mind on only your breaths. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth counting up to ten or backward from ten with each breath.
- **Gratitude and Well-Wishing** - This form of meditation asks you to focus on counting your blessings. Concentrate on one or several things for which you are grateful. You can also quietly send out well-wishes to a list of things in the world starting with those things for which you are grateful and working back to things for which you are less grateful like business problems (i.e. opportunities for creativity).
- **Mealtime Meditation** - Use your lunch break to focus on your meal. Enjoy the smell of your food, its texture, and the way its taste changes from the first bite to when you swallow the last. Think about where the food came from and everyone who was

involved in the process of planting, growing, picking, distributing, shipping, and selling.

- **Driving Meditation** - Even though the commute is a stressful activity for most, it can be an opportunity to meditate. Don't spend your drive, thinking about everything waiting for you at the office. Instead, focus only on the road and your vehicle.

As you can see, there are a multitude of different ways to meditate. You can make almost any activity meditative as long as you intentionally focus your mind on the present while participating.

## **Measuring the ROI of Practicing Mindfulness in Your Business**

We talk a lot about the high cost of bringing all of your people together for company meetings, so what's the cost of asking everyone to spend five to ten minutes meditating every day? While it's less than the cost of meeting for an hour, even five minutes of your time and that of your employees is still an expense.

However, the benefits of practicing mindfulness in the workplace are astounding, and we challenge you to use your automated back office to measure the ROI.

Work short meditation breaks into your workplace's daily schedule and then watch your productivity and people charts over the next several months to see the difference in your bottom line as your own mind and leadership skills are strengthened along with the minds of all of your employees.

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[1] <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition>

[2] <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation-in-depth>



[3]

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-2004585>  
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[4] <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/things-to-know-about-meditation-for-health>

[5] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4940234/>

[6] <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2010/11/wandering-mind-not-a-happy-mind/>

[7] [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1361002 /](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1361002/)

[8] <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/339410>

[9] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7395604/>