

Five Laws of Vertical Development for Leaders



Elevating the effectiveness of leaders is a surefire way to elevate the organization.

When it comes to leadership development, there are two forms of development we can focus on:

HORIZONTAL DEVELOPMENT - Increasing leaders' knowledge and skills.

This is like adding an app onto an iPad. A new app broadens the iPad's functionality, but it doesn't improve how effectively the iPad operates. Similarly, when someone gains knowledge and skills, it broadens their functionality, but it doesn't necessarily improve how effectively they operate.

VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT - Upgrading leaders' internal operating system such that they operate in more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated ways.

This form of development is different from what we are used to. It involves different activities than horizontal development, and it feels different. But, it is the only way to truly elevate how effectively leaders lead.

Horizontal development can be incrementally helpful, but it can never be transformationally helpful. In fact, when you understand The Five Laws of Vertical Development for Leaders (next page), you will better understand that vertically developing our leaders is the only sure way to elevate our organizations.



Five Laws of Vertical Development for Leaders

1. As leaders' elevate in their vertical development altitude (i.e., become more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated), they become more capable of effectively navigating tumultuous market conditions (including change, pressure, uncertainty, and complexity) because they can:
 - Better regulate themselves (responders vs. reactors)
 - See further (long-term vs. short-term)
 - Think more strategically (purpose-driven vs. outcome-driven)
2. Leaders put into place organizational structures, practices, and policies that emerge from their vertical development altitude (i.e., level of cognitive and emotional sophistication).
3. The culture of an organization is a reflection of its leaders' vertical development altitude (i.e., level of cognitive and emotional sophistication).
4. Organizations cannot evolve beyond their leaders' vertical development level (i.e., level of cognitive and emotional sophistication).
5. The most effective way of transforming an organization is to help its leaders elevate in their vertical development altitude (i.e., become more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated).

“The vertical altitude of an organization’s leaders sets the ceiling for the effectiveness and success of the organization.”