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**MINDSET VS. TOOLSET:
THE HUMAN OS FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT**

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GETTING THE MULTIPLIER RIGHT**



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He is passionate about user centricity and leveraging advancements in data, technology and AI algorithms as enablers of value. Previously, he held leadership roles at Fractal focusing on advanced analytics for CPGs in demand shaping – RGM, Media optimization, Omni Channel. Vibhor holds an engineering degree from IIT BHU, Varanasi.

ABSTRACT

When organizations invest in building advanced data and analytics capabilities — whether it's revenue growth management, pricing optimization, or advanced forecasting — the conversation often gravitates towards selecting tools and training users.

Mindset is not a soft lever or a support stream — it's the belief system, behavioral posture, and human design lens that unlocks impact, drives adoption and nurtures sustenance.

This article argues that the difference between capability efforts that stall and those that scale lies in whether organizations treat mindset as the foundation, not the afterthought. By exploring how organizations must shift from linear implementation to impact-driven thinking, from analytics creation to insight consumption, and from siloed tooling to integrated operating rhythms, we redefine what real adoption takes — and why it always starts in the mind – especially in disciplines like Revenue Growth Management (RGM), where adoption gaps are common.

In RGM, this shows up in whether advanced pricing or promo models actually land in JBP, whether account teams use outputs with confidence in retailer negotiations, and whether leadership tracks impact on NSV and margin. This should not be limited to only dashboard tracking activity.



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INTRODUCTION

In an age where digital transformation is everywhere, companies are rightly focused on building new commercial capabilities. They implement AI-powered engines, stand up pricing and promo tools, and invest in data harmonization.

But still — many efforts struggle to scale or stick.

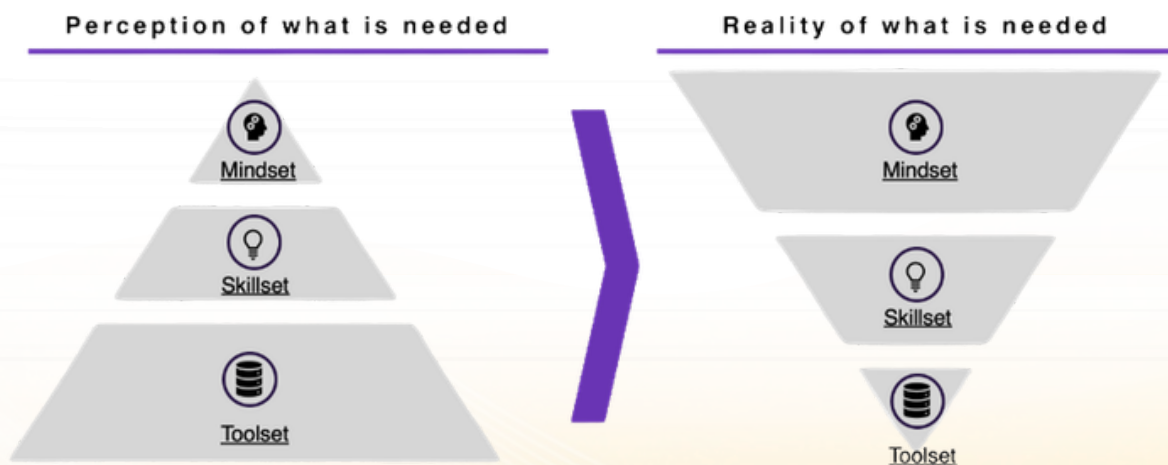
That's because what's often missing isn't a system or a skill. It's a **mindset**. Not mindset in the abstract, but mindset as a **design posture, a user-centered orientation, shaping how enterprise value is created, and how decisions are made**.

Mindset determines whether users are empowered or overwhelmed. Whether change is embraced or resented. And whether capabilities lead to business impact — or just burnt calories. Organizations are always balancing between speed to value, standardization and scale. Too often, change management is treated as a side stream — something that happens after rollout. That's precisely why it fails.

CHANGE DOESN'T HAPPEN AFTER IMPLEMENTATION — IT STARTS BEFORE DESIGN. MINDSET IS CHANGE MANAGEMENT.

In practice, this means building around commercial decision points viz. price increases, pack resizing, promo calendars. If the design does not embed into these workflows, RGM tools get treated as parallel reporting layers instead of the way business is run.

FLIP THE FUNNEL: MINDSET COMES FIRST



Most organizations build capability in this order:



TOOLSET → SKILLSET → MINDSET

But in reality, **mindset must come first.**

It sets the intent, defines the approach, and determines the value frame. Here's how it should look:

MINDSET → SKILLSET → TOOLSET

Think about the iPhone. Its success wasn't about the user manual (skillset) or the hardware (toolset). It was about a **reimagined user experience** — a mindset shift around how people could live their digital lives that brings communication, internet, games, productivity through a single device.

The same principle applies to enterprise capability. Adoption isn't about tech enablement. It's about how we *think, prioritize, and design for human engagement in daily commercial routines.*

That's why mindset isn't just a layer. It's the **operating system.**

Too many RGM deployments begin with a dashboard drop, hoping users will adapt. The successful ones reverse it – they start from how account managers prepare for a retailer meeting, how finance approves promo spend, how RGM managers or Finance Controllers defend corridors. That day-to-day cadence becomes the design anchor.

MINDSET PRINCIPLE #1: BE GREEDY ABOUT CONSUMPTION, NOT JUST CREATION

Organizations often pride themselves on building analytics, modeling pipelines, and visualization tools — all focused-on insight **creation.**

But insights alone don't create value. Decisions do.

Creation is necessary.

Consumption is where value happens.

A capability that doesn't drive action is just noise or, at best, an interesting artifact.

And users won't act unless what they see is **accessible, interpretable, and relevant to their world.**

That's why a **human-centered mindset** is so essential. It forces us to ask:

- Who is this insight for?
- What decision are they trying to make?
- How can we reduce friction in their workflow?



For instance, elasticity models across ~20 categories x retailer combinations do not matter unless that translates into a ~3 pricing scenarios a GM can act on. Consumption mindset means outputs must be packaged as retailer-ready sell-in stories or simple guardrails for promo depth; a key point to note is that it should not only be about correct model coefficients.

When mindset shifts toward **consumption greed**, adoption follows — not through mandates, but through pull.

MINDSET PRINCIPLE #2: RGM IS AN INTEGRATED ENTERPRISE CAPABILITY, NOT A SET OF SILOS

Another mindset trap is treating capability as disconnected pillars:

- Pricing has one tool.
- Promotions live elsewhere.
- Pack and mix? Separate conversations.

But RGM doesn't work in isolation. The best companies treat it as an **integrated capability** — where:

- **Price and promo** are two sides of the same coin
- **Pack and mix** inform trade-offs
- All four levers are activated in rhythm with the commercial calendar

Top-quartile organizations don't deploy capability in pieces. They drive **orchestration**, not fragmentation.

We have seen the cost of fragmentation viz. trade marketing runs promo without pack mix economics, finance approves pricing without promo ROI visibility. The real shift comes when there is one cadence – promo approvals that reference mix margins and pricing guardrails in the same forum.

This is a **mindset shift from tooling to an enterprise operating model** — and it defines whether RGM becomes a scalable advantage or a disconnected initiative competing for airtime.

MINDSET PRINCIPLE #3: YOU DON'T NEED TO GET THE DATA RIGHT. YOU NEED THE RIGHT DATA

Many organizations chase “data readiness” as a prerequisite for action — spending years harmonizing, cleaning, and centralizing data before a single commercial decision is made. The assumption is: *only once the data is right can we create value.*

But the truth is: **there is no perfect data. And waiting for it only delays impact.**

Instead of asking “*Is the data ready?*” we should be asking: “*What decision are we trying to enable — and what's the minimum data we need to get started?*”



This mindset flips the logic. Start with a **high-value decision use case**, then **hydrate your data lake iteratively** around that. As usage increases, so does the data quality — not because of cleansing alone, but because **decisions are pulling the need for better data**.

Big-bang data strategies often result in massive warehouses, low engagement, and limited tie to commercial decisions. Iterative, decision-led approaches, on the other hand, drive **compounding value** — each cycle of use sharpens the system and reinforces behavior.

Take promo ROI: you rarely start with perfect lift data. But running even a handful of evaluations on shipment + POS + promo data creates pull. Suddenly, sales and finance want cleaner causal data because they have seen the value in action. Adoption pulls data quality forward – not the other way around.

Mindset shift: Don't wait to fix your data. Use your decisions to fix your data — and your organization.

CONCLUSION

Skillset matters. Toolset matters.

But **mindset multiplies both — or renders them meaningless**.

Without mindset:

- Skills become mechanics.
- Tools gather dust.
- Change burns calories but doesn't create value.

With the right mindset:

- Adoption becomes culture.
- Analytics become decisions.
- Capabilities become part of the business rhythm.

Most importantly, we stop designing for tools...

...and start designing for **humans, for outcomes, and for impact**. **Mindset is not the soft stuff. It's the hard edge of adoption. In RGM especially, it defines whether capability translates into commercial impact. And it's time we treated it that way.**

In RGM, the line between adoption theatre and business impact is simple: does the capability change how we set prices, run promos, and shape portfolio mix? When it does, mindset is not just philosophy – it compounds into sustained commercial advantage.



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