

## Agile Business Leader Developing the Next Generation



In our last article we spoke about Agile Business Leaders (ABL) and their ability to play a key role in the future of organisational success. The ABL model is a performance model providing a bedrock of required skills and abilities for any leader who wants to positively impact success. An ABL involves functioning and performing within four roles. These roles are:

- **Enabler-** Being able to leverage the knowledge and wisdom of everyone in the business.
- **Champion-** Having the character and integrity to achieve and succeed.
- **Specialist-** Possessing industrial intelligence and the means to continuously gather more.
- **Strategist-** Creating a sustainable organization and pushing to embrace greater possibilities.

To be an effective leader, a person must be able to perform a task with an appropriate level of interpersonal skills, professional knowledge, and operational ability to achieve a goal.

## The Agile Business Leader®



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This article focuses on the young adult who wants gain an unsurpassed opportunity for understanding organizational reality and the meaning of leadership development. It concentrates not only on the attributes of the leader but on the nature of the leader-follower relationship. We recognize that changes in the workplace have created the need for emerging leaders to be ready to enter into the workforce as skilled, knowledgeable, and agile thinkers. The reality is, organizations don't have 5-10 years to help a person grow into a leader. They need to hire leaders who already have practical leadership skills to help propel the organization towards success.

Talent management for all generations of workers is one of the most critical agenda items for Agile, high performance organizations and it is what makes the organization what it is. Many organizations agree that people are their most

valuable asset yet few consider its importance. Despite the importance of people development, it is not accounted for on the balance sheet. Organizations are thought of simply in terms of what they produce; products and services rather than the talent that creates those things.

There is a secret to developing talent in your organization; everybody has it! Historically the “development” philosophy within organizations, whether they are; NGO’s (non government organizations) Government Departments, Small to Medium Enterprises) or Multi-national Corporations, has been to spend great amounts of time and money on “fixing what’s broken”. There has become a misguided belief that this will create excellence. Over the past few years we have been working from the opposite perspective which has proven to create exponentially faster change at the individual, team and organizational levels. This new approach is derived from looking at change from a positive psychology perspective.

Generally, current reality shows that people derive happiness from what they are good at. This typically happens because we get rewarded for what we are good at and we get punished for what we are not good at. The surprise to most organizations is that rewards usually don’t cost the anything! The reward comes from some form of personal satisfaction through recognition; feeling valued, or being respected for what they are good at.

We have found it to be exponentially faster to develop people, teams and whole organizations by helping people find their “gifts” (what they are good at) and enabling them to get even better. This approach has an extraordinary effect, people are happier and their performance increase. When you work from this point of positiveness, people are encouraged to address their perceived “weaknesses” from a position of strength. In other words they use their strengths to positively improve upon their weaknesses. This new approach is closely

linked to managing people and developing leaders and the talent within the organization.

Over the years, the evolution of talent management has moved from being completely unconnected to business strategy to being tightly connected and aligned to how the business wants to succeed. This means developing leadership skills early as a young adult is key. This is not just for leadership succession but to help create talent-powered organizations. Developing the next generation of leaders is about priming individuals to become wise and innovative and prepared to meet the demands of the future.

As the world of business changes so does the need for developing effective leaders who can respond to emerging issues. The question becomes, what is the most effective way to be a leader in this Chaordic Age which we are now living in? This article describes the multifaceted process for strategically developing skill sets, knowledge and behaviors needed by young adults wanting to understand organizational dynamics and develop themselves as leaders. This will provide a head start in the business world through the abilities to;

- respond quickly to the needs of the organization
- become resilient to change
- learn from and build upon the shared knowledge of the organization.

In our work with organizations across the world we have found that if you want to quickly get ahead in today's global economy you have to learn early how to be adaptive and flexible and work with emerging trends and demanding customers. You have to think of ways to accelerate your learning and be ready to have a huge impact very early in your career. New generation employees expect that they **will** be a valuable asset to the organization they work with.

We encourage emerging leaders to accelerate their opportunity for success by developing the skills of strategic thinking, innovation, communication and self

awareness. We value the importance of effective human interaction, facilitation and collaboration as a technique for becoming an Agile leader and a contributing global citizen. For that reason we believe emerging leaders who want the opportunity to achieve more and faster by learning, practicing and understanding techniques for effective leadership early in their career should consider strengthening their skills in the following four areas.

1. **Building Specialist skills-** Understanding, money management, business operations, business etiquette, having a professional image and improving your English language skills to work in the global market.
2. **Becoming a Champion within yourself-** Understanding your personality and how it impacts others, managing stress and anger, building your social and business network, acting with courage, setting high expectations and developing your self esteem
3. **Learning to Enable learning of yourself and others-** Having listening skills, possessing strong presentation skills, knowing how to negotiate and resolve conflict, know how to facilitate results and being able to manage appropriate business communications.
4. **Thinking and acting strategically-** Knowing how to succeed in other parts of the world, able to lead change, able to be innovative, capable of strategic thinking.

How we do business is changing and how we need to lead during these changing times is changing faster. The ability of leaders to play a role that is effective is the key to future organizational success. The developing Third World has no reason to behave by old rules and in fact, has every reason to take extreme risks in pursuit of transcendent rewards. The old command and control models for leaders are being replaced by a new approach that fosters a highly collaborative, ethically based approach to achieving a positively focused “desired future state”. With globalization and increased competition, organizations can no longer survive only on their past success and the way they have always accomplished results.

The next generation leaders needs to Agile in order to succeed. They will be able to incorporate the ingenuity, resourcefulness, skills and abilities of each of their team members and leverage the resources of the organization in building opportunities and solutions... They will be innovative, stive for creating new ideas and new products. The next generation of leaders WILL BE Agile Business Leaders.

Where a traditional leader would direct a team using his authority, an ABL involves all stakeholders, incorporates the business vision and collaborates to get the work done. As individuals learn to become leaders of tomorrow, we suggest they meticulously observe leadership and followership in action as there is such rich learning through observations from another person's perspective... We suggest they prepare themselves as Agile Business Leaders and accept that change is an everyday occurrence and an opportunity for growth. They should learn to ferret out gateways for change and leverage the strengths of individuals and groups to create reliable and efficient solutions. They can be the ones who help to create a sense of ownership in the task.

Over the years, we've seen leaders with command and control mindsets doom entire organizations to mediocrity or sheer survival. We promote the development of the Agile Business Leader mindset, one that is grounded in a radical shift in perspective about how organizations operate when leaders positively leverage their capabilities, and exhibit the courage to adapt and face the challenges of our new strategic reality with agility.

This article encourages you to recognize, that when you change the way you look at things, you change the way things look. We challenge you to develop the skills of the Agile Business Leader.

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