

# AGILITY: THE NEW STABILITY IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD

## Abstract

If vision is the foundation of why a company exists then agile organization has a vision that infers the necessity of adaptability and disciplined execution of the vision. The company's culture that supports this kind of vision fosters innovation, speed, resiliency, team collaboration and efficiency within the organization. Every company today is investing in transforming itself into an agile organization, dealing with uncertainties of external environment and those with a stable structure are the ones that hold the key to agility, deal with speed better, resulting in both stability and growth in the long run. Agility lies at the heart of those organizations that outperform cyclicalities and see the acceleration of disruptive change as an opportunity. An agile organization responds to global needs strategically with urgency and intentionality and leaders also understand that high responsiveness to change is a function of building an adaptive mindset, putting the system in place to drive transparency and operational efficiency serving as a backbone for an enterprise.

**Keywords:** vision, innovation, team collaboration, disruptive change, operational efficiency.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Agility as a form of stability can leverage business into exciting new possibilities, responding to complex social issues in an authentic way in the long run. Adaptability and agility is not the kind where one is being forced to change but it is a strategic choice where one chooses to adapt or change proactively on their own. An organization's culture should be characterized by stability that has the ability to counterbalance the desire for innovation, result-oriented and goal-directed behavior while remaining a progressive one. Companies with both speed and stability have seventy percent chances of being healthy. Organization which focus only on stability or agility are the ones in which the counterbalance is missing since stability can only be created by creating a professional image at workplace.

## II. SO WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

A professional image describes the way a person conducts themselves at work, the attitude they possess at workplace and how others perceive them. People often strive for a professional image that aligns with the expectation of their particular workplace, helping them influence decision making process by forming important business connections to communicate these decisions more effectively.

## III. COMPONENTS OF A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

Understanding the components and their role in creating a professional image can help making assessment about how to present at workplace. An individual's professional image includes four components:

- 1. Communication Style:** The conversation habit, the language an individual chooses is both a part of the professional image. This includes how an individual speaks about himself, his work, about others, tone and words used at workplace.
- 2. Behaviour and Attitude:** An individual's mindset towards work can have a positive or negative impact on productivity and others can often sense this attitude based on behaviour. Taking initiative, addressing responsibility and encouraging others are all behaviour that reflects a positive professional attitude.
- 3. Nonverbal Communication:** This may include body posture, eye contact and hand gestures, all of which can convey the thoughts and emotions in ways an individual may not be conscious, but which still affect how others perceive them.
- 4. Attire and Grooming:** An individual's dressing sense and style for professional gathering impacts the professional image. Demonstrating attention to the appearance reflects confidence and gives an impression that they understand their social role at workplace.

## IV. HOW TO CREATE A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE AT WORKPLACE

Establishing a strong professional image helps maintain positive workplace relationship so one should learn to understand how to create this positive image

- 1. Being Mindful of First Impression:** People form first impression quickly, and these impressions can impact scenarios like job interview and meeting with new clients. So individuals should be mindful of their appearances to project a positive professional image.
- 2. Assess your Communication Style:** Depending on your comfort level use a clear speech pattern to convey the purpose of communication by sharing accurate information, maintaining eye contact, while practicing active listening during conversation.
- 3. Consider what your Clothes Reflect about you:** If possible keep your attire neat, reduce the number of wrinkles in the clothing and dress within your means. It can increase your confidence level, which may help perform job responsibilities successfully.
- 4. Use Social Media Thoughtfully:** Because of social media's increased presence, it is important to be mindful of the version presented online. Your posts should match your professional image you're cultivating at work. By being consistent about the image one can avoid any potential missteps about how others perceive your attitude and behaviour.
- 5. Increase your Time Management Skills:** while attending meeting and presentations always remain punctual and arrive on time. It conveys a strong sense of professionalism, and often shows respect for work.
- 6. Find a Mentor:** Find a colleague or supervisor who makes you learn how to navigate and maintain professional relationship, which is an important component of the professional image.
- 7. Remain Positive:** Approach new situations optimistically with a warm and confident attitude.
- 8. Be Accountable:** Assume responsibility for your actions, improve your conduct, and inspire others to show the same aspect in their own professional perspective.
- 9. Strengthen your Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive the moods of others and alter your behaviour accordingly. To enhance your professional image is to understand the priorities and motivation of others.
- 10. Attend Networking Events:** Attend networking event like workshop or seminar to develop industry connections in order to maintain positive image.

In this context a professional manager has a very important role to play as they can help make efficiency and productivity a reality, maximizing the team's ability to deliver the desired value. These managers coach, inspire, and lead teams rather than measuring their performance focusing on their ability.

## V. CAN AGILITY AND STABILITY GO HAND IN HAND

Stability and agility complement each other. Without stability, a consistent and steadfast approach would fail and without agility stagnation can occur. Speed of delivery and

system stability, are not an either or situation and elite performers deliver frequently, maintain high quality at low cost to result in fewer bugs.

So what is an agile organization? A true agile organization represents a delicate balance between flexibility and stability, and a capacity not only to react to the demands of an ever-changing market, but also a desire to constantly rethink, reinvigorate, and reinvent the approach to business. The adoption of agile processes (ranging from quick adaptation to market changes to increased flexibility in dealing with customer demands) has quite rightly come to be regarded as an essential aspect of effective organizational functioning. One can unlock the organization's adaptive potential by championing a culture of agility.

The benefits associated with adopting an agile approach are undoubtedly appealing, ranging from increased product quality and customer satisfaction, to improved financial performance and team morale. For these benefits to be fully realized, one must exercise caution and ensure that all the efforts are not directed towards the implementation of process believed to enhance speed and efficiency.

Instead, one must demonstrate an aptitude for organizational agility, by creating a culture which provides a central focus on the continued satisfaction of 3Cs-change, contribution, continual readiness as core capabilities.

- 1. Change:** The agile organization should be able to facilitate change in at least one of four ways: by facilitating the creation of change; by pre-empting change if it is created elsewhere; by responding proactively to change after it has occurred; and by continually learning from change in order to positively inform future creation, pro action, and reaction. For change to be successful, organization should engage in continuous and real-time evaluation.
- 2. Contribution:** The agile organization appreciates that all key business processes should positively contribute to: perceived economy through actively adopting more cost-effective tools and techniques; perceived simplicity by adopting more simplistic tools and techniques and perceived quality through continual monitoring of these newly adopted tools and techniques.
- 3. Continual Readiness:** An agile organization should be continually ready for implementing new processes without incurring any unnecessary costs or delay. This requires continuous scanning of the market for emerging trends, ensuring continuous alignment between the change and contribution related processes which have been introduced.

For successful maximization of the 3Cs capabilities, agility requires fluidity especially for those, in position of leadership must work to reduce the inevitable sources of friction which have the potential to slow down or even halt the progress of agile practices. Some of the key challenges likely to be encountered when introducing the agility agenda and the solution which can be deployed to overcome them are mentioned below:

### Challenge A

- **Organizational Gravity:** When attempting to instigate transformative agile process, many employees may quickly gravitate back to old ways of working, especially if they do not witness quick results.

**Solution:** Leaders must ensure that their working teams fully appreciate that agility is reliant on willingness to embrace change. There should be a clear alignment between existing professional roles and newly introduced process to ease the agile transition.

### Challenge B

- **Misalignment between Process and Culture:** Agility based practices fail to make an impact due to misalignment between process and culture. There may be a temptation to change the process rather than address the underlying cultural aspect.

**Solution:** Leaders must appreciate that organizational agility requires a delicate balance between stability and dynamism. From stability perspective, leaders must ensure that their organization remains true to its core vision and values, promotes standardized ways of working and champions continued cohesion. Leaders must promote a proactive culture, to equip employees effectively, sense and seize on emerging opportunities while adapting to changing customer demands, functioning across organizational boundaries so they can lend their support and expertise to emerging agile projects.

### Challenge C

- **Lack of Urgency:** Agility requires swift and proactive action.

**Solution:** Leaders must create a sense of urgency by ensuring agility-based transformation as a top strategic priority and not an optional short-term initiative. While highlighting the benefits associated with adoption of agility, it is crucial that top executives must appreciate that once introduced agile processes are the central component of the company's key to long-term success. Agility actually creates opportunities for the business in the form of increasing employment rates while practicing new leadership styles.

## VI. AGILITY AND LIVING IN THE TENSION

An organization's attitude towards agility is the amalgamation of speed, operative decision making ability and organizational stability. These factors seem to be diametrically opposite to each other but work synergistically in alignment to keep the company focused on its vision and preventing it from becoming haphazard. The pace of decision making facilitates the company to adjust to a constantly changing perspective. And with an appropriate level of organizational stability, the firm easily focuses on accomplishing both short term and long term objectives efficiently. Those companies that can create a balance and walk the tight rope between flexibility and efficiency of process reap the benefits of agility, capturing opportunities easily that other companies see retrospectively. This tension starts unfolding as

companies grow from small enterprise to larger and complex ones. Bureaucratic system and the firm's inability to adjust to external environment, hinders the pace of progress as the firm grows from a small company where few individuals make decision compared to a large one facing multiple environment simultaneously. If in case the organizational stability is already below average, it will prevent the firm from adapting quickly to this new transformational process.

## VII. FACTORS OF AN AGILE ORGANIZATION

Highly agile companies are a blend of certain factors that support decision making process:

1. It starts with agile leaders- The culture of agility percolates from the top level, who inculcates transformation process in the organization integrating the company's vision, mission and key decisions, communicating it to all levels for encouraging the executive's ability of risk taking. These agile leaders are capable of stimulating employees to approach challenges differently based on past lessons learned, look for opportunities to capitalize on external ideas, maintain flexibility to respond to changes, encourage employees to bring ideas to the front line for cutting edge solution for the achievement of goals. The leaders keep the organization moving constantly, preventing them getting paralyzed by too much uncertainty from the external environment.
2. The principle of delegation of authority and employee empowerment should be embedded in the practices of the organization which means that an individual should be fast in making decisions and adjustment without delay in case of any failure.
3. The cultural practices should guide an individual's attention to business activities, for avoiding inconsistent or unpredictable decision making by establishing transparent policies, identifying limitations within which an individual needs to work for providing long-term stability to the company.
4. Communicates clearly defined roles and expectations, for maintaining high performance level, based on clear cut objective, with cross-functional exposure for implementing the policies to produce viable results.
5. Actively pursuing talent diversity. An organization with heterogeneous pool of talent brings a comprehensive perspective of employees, on where to play and how to win. This promotes the competitiveness internally, inspiring individuals to innovate and solve complex issues using different viewpoint. It might vary depending on the company or an individual's level of curiosity and tenacity which would make them compatible for an environment that encourages quick learning and response.
6. Responsiveness is the key to quick decision-making, so the annual performance review is not sufficient to meet these needs. Leaders must focus on improving performance by providing continuous feedback to achieve the desired outcome within the mentioned time frame. This requires frequent feedback to take advantage of opportunities to grow and develop people's thinking.
7. Planning and implementation occurs in nearly every company in the industry, but functional discipline actually differentiates a flexible organization from the inflexible one. The ability to act and respond quickly to changing conditions is essential since vision without flawless execution is delusional.
8. Finally, the company's agile practices include responsiveness in responding to market trends and strategic thinking based on company values and processes that enable effective decision-making by employees at all levels.

## VIII. WHY THE ORGANIZATION NEEDS TO BE AGILE

The idea of organizational agility is very enticing but not for the ones who look for a quick fix. It takes deep conviction, strong initiative and unwavering tenacity to first envision its impact and then translate and reinforce the behaviour required throughout the organization. Individuals often question enterprise agility, but the positive outcome that most businesses get from agility cannot be denied. Being agile is a significant component of the change process, as it ensures success by

- 1. Speeding up the Response to Constant Changes:** In an unstable world, businesses that respond quickly to change are galloping ahead in the race to survive and succeed. Agile companies are better at generating additional revenue with more focus on technology and methodology to maximise speed and strive for quality enhancement. Adopting agile practices can easily bring positive changes and accommodate with the uncertainties from the external environment
- 2. Helps to Catch Up with Business Leaders:** Agility becomes the first step to have an edge over the competitors. The imperative for the competition is not just to collaborate and compete with each other for survival but also to access opportunities quickly to be at par with other competitors.
- 3. Adds New Skills at Workplace:** The prime purpose of agility is to structure enterprise as a collaborative network of cross-functional teams fully equipped with skills required to achieve the vision of the organization. Agile business believes in working continuously for upgrading of the human resource skill base for improvement in productivity.
- 4. Increases Operational Efficiency:** Agile organization can result in 30% increase in the operational efficiency and 5 to 10 times increase in the speed of work, contributing 15%-65% increase in financial performance.
- 5. Enhances Employee Empowerment and Engagement:** Agile organization believes in empowering employees and teams by delegating authority at lower level for decision-making to create a collaborative work environment that can attract talent and ensure employee engagement. It supports autonomy; purpose and mastery in the employees which lets them grow and work efficiently.
- 6. Better Flexibility:** Teams can focus on new priorities better since an agile enterprise possesses operating flexibility needed for adapting to change remaining straightforward, so that the organization can effectively deliver whatever is demanded from the external environment in order to boost sales and profits.
- 7. Higher Resilience:** Due to the presence of agile environment company is resilient to sudden changes and successfully adapts it. The leaders role becomes important as they can redirect the team and solve problems swiftly, which lets them get back to the original way of working more quickly.

## IX. CONCLUSION

For incorporating agile practices, visionary leaders with tactical thinking and mental flexibility are required who have the ability to identify top performers capable of giving exceptional outcomes compared to the ones giving only the desired outcome. For achieving this, energetic cultural practices focusing on change, needs to be nurtured and reinforced, correlating its impact on performance, employee empowerment and accountability, along with employee and customer satisfaction with better operational productivity. For this top management should set a clear vision and direction for the business, understand the need for openness to new ideas and radical attention for adoption of efficient system by the organization. The leaders also set performance metrics, empower individuals through effective delegation of authority, reducing the layers in the hierarchy responsible for slowing down the process of reaching conclusion and managing end results with clear projection of how to achieve them. Agility is all about corporate culture, rules, and structure and management practices adopted that contributes positively to achieve stability in an unstable world.

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