



Business Agility Is Really About Adaptability

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Most of my clients these days are seeking help in developing strategies that will enable them to become more agile and quick. But, many struggle to embrace the deeper implications of what that really means to build business agility.



Sure, nearly everyone I speak with on the subject recognizes that business agility is about being able to readily respond to changes in the marketplace. Greater agility helps businesses to react more swiftly to the rise of “*industry disruptors*,” to manage the emergence of new competitors and to successfully ride the wave of any kind of dramatic shifts in overall market conditions, be they positive or negative.

But, what does it really take for a business to become more agile? Let me share a model with you that I like to use when helping clients develop the transformation plans required to enable better agility:

Agility can be assessed across four dimensions of adaptability, as follows:

1. **Leadership adaptability:** leadership that understands the company’s strengths and weaknesses, knowing how it stacks-up against its competition in regard to its offerings, price and service delivery;
2. **Team adaptability:** staff that is comfortable in embracing new ways of thinking and doing;

3. **Change adaptability:** culture that embraces complexity and is comfortable in continuously exploring new ways to get things done;

4. **Delivery adaptability:** line management that can maintain its composure in times of uncertainty and respond well under pressure.

All four are centered on people (e.g., senior leadership, management and staff) and culture (i.e., preferred modes of thinking and behaving).

Using this simple model, I can assess a business by determining its current state of adaptability across each of these four dimensions and, then, work with the leadership team to craft the actions plans necessary to optimize the firm's agility over time. Using a combination of survey instruments, one-on-one interviews and group workshops I can baseline an organization's leadership, team, change and delivery "*adaptabilities*" to determine the best way forward for a given business concern.

It's important to note that part of the work in developing strategies to become more agile needs to examine a leadership team's capabilities as they relate identifying organizational blind spots, diagnosing emerging problems and "*architecting*" winning solutions to overcome challenges. After all, the plan that is ultimately drafted for a give business must match the leadership team's level of self-awareness and analytical skill or it will not resonate with them – and, will quickly become dust-ridden "*shelfware*" upon my departure.

To close, business agility is about adaptability. Build a business that is adaptable and it will become better positioned to swiftly make the mid-course adjustments required to seize opportunities and respond to challenges. I hope that the model of thinking that I've share here will help you to consider ways to think about, analyze and improve your business agility. For more insight, **drop me a line.**