

Learning Agility

Synopsis

Learning agility is defined as a person's ability and orientation to learn new things. The two critical components of learning agility are learning orientation and learning ability. The former refers to the essential behavioural competencies that predispose an individual to learn new things faster than others. The latter refers to crucial cognitive competencies that allow a person to learn quickly by identifying patterns, logical rules and data trends.

- Learning agility is currently a hot skill as it considers the ever-changing business environment.
- Learning agility is a combination of skills that enables a person to learn, relearn and adapt to changing situations easily.
- Learning agility consists of both the ability and the attitude to learn.
- Learning agility is critical for a future-ready workforce that can adapt to changing work environment.

➤ Why is learning agility important?

Agile learning has a profound impact on performance, so several companies are incorporating it in their learning strategy.

60% of companies experience growth in profits after adopting an Agile approach.

Agile learners are not afraid of risks or challenges; they are comfortable in uncomfortable scenarios. Learning agility helps employees create a mindset that propels them to seek challenges, ask for feedback, ponder over shortcomings, improve and grow. Learning agility has a positive impact on both the employee and the organization's success.



A case study:

During the peak of the pandemic, several companies found themselves in a situation where they didn't know what to do. Some waited for a solution to arise and eventually vanished, while a few moved out of their comfort zone and figured out how to solve the situation. Most tried to capitalize on every opportunity they got during the crises and evolved stronger.

For instance, Shree Shakti Enterprise, a Walmart supplier dealing in essential Kitchenware, had to close all their three manufacturing units during the lockdown due to low consumption and sales. However, instead of panicking, they ventured into uncharted territory by tapping into the need of the moment. From sensor-based sanitizer dispensers to automatic foot sanitizers and handsfree sanitizers, Shree Shakti started building products that could be useful during the crisis. It received 850+ orders and had Rs. 1.15 crore sales during the lockdown.

The agile mindset helped businesses like Shree Shakti Enterprise respond promptly to the changing market demands and flourish during the crisis. If the same agility is applied to the learning and development of employees, a company can withstand any business turmoil. Post-covid, the need for a workforce that can adapt to the changing situations and execute the business leader's plans has increased. So, learning agility has become the core focus of many organizations to prepare their employees to adapt and respond to unpredictable market conditions with confidence.

Speed and flexibility are two important components of learning agility. Speed enables employees to take quick action, and flexibility helps them be open to new concepts.

Learning agility is the best way to future-proof your employment.

Examples of learning agility

Below is a classic learning agility example.



Example: An Indonesian-based pawn broking company noticed that the new hires are taking a lot of time to reach full productivity due to the unstructured onboarding process followed. Hence, they embedded learning agility into their onboarding process to amplify time to productivity by introducing a learning platform. A learning platform created a 4-week onboarding journey to onboard employees quickly. They could track learning progress and ensure workplace satisfaction through constant feedback. This agile approach helped them amplify time to productivity and reduce onboarding costs by 40%.

Learning Ability ≠ Learning Agility

Without underestimating ability, we have to first understand the difference between ability and agility. The latter starts where the former ends. Ability takes you to a certain point. Thereafter, Agility becomes important.

Successful companies are the ones that harness Learning Agility to rapidly adapt, adopt and innovate

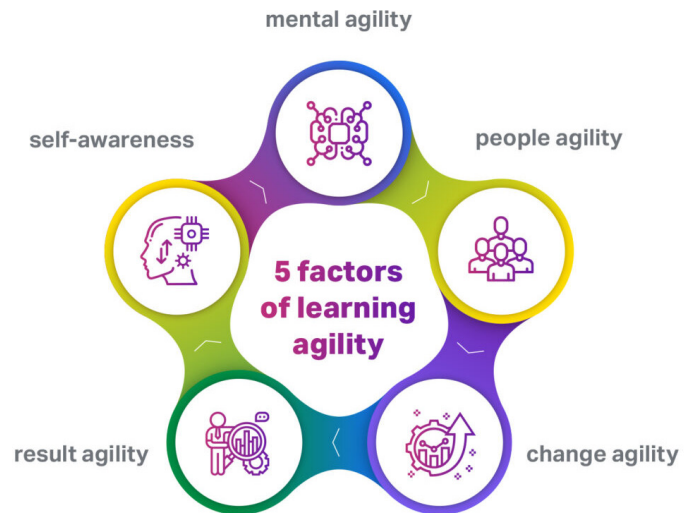
According to a report, by 2030, automation could eliminate 73 million jobs in U.S. and about 48 – 54 million US workforce may need to change their occupations.

This could call for a push towards cross-functional promotion from the product side and a transition from individual contributor to a team manager on the leadership side.



5 factors of learning agility

Korn Ferry has stated five factors of learning agility:



Mental agility

Mental agility is more akin to street smart rather than book smart. Employees with mental agility embrace complexity, stay inquisitive and make fresh connections.

People agility

People's agility consists of characteristics like communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills. Such employees have a high level of emotional intelligence and are capable of bringing out the best in others.

Result agility

Individuals with result agility can deliver consistently in new or challenging situations. They are often calm and composed. Such employees do not give up and try to reach their goals even in unfamiliar situations.

Change agility

Change agility is quite similar to result agility. Those with change agility are experimental, and they do not hesitate in walking on unknown paths to solve a problem. They aren't afraid of failure; such employees learn from their experiences and keep trying until they succeed.

Individuals with change agility are always willing to learn something new. They integrate learning into the flow of work to address any hurdle that comes their way easily

Self-awareness

Employees who achieve a high score in self-awareness know their strengths, weaknesses, and limitations.

Traits that boost overall agile learning process

- Determination
- Stay organized
- Commitment to continuous learning

➤ Why is learning agility important in the workplace?

Learning agility **helps your team capitalize on every opportunity that comes their way.** It helps them develop the skills needed to survive in today's volatile, uncertain, and unpredictable business world.

Factors That Drive Agility

