Agile Workforce Development
and the **Future of Work**

How to Future-Proof Your Business
with an Agile Mindset

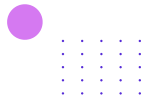# Table of **Contents**

Introduction

- Do you find that your **customer requirements change frequently?**

- Do you predict that your **content shelf life will be short?**

- Do your requirements include **learning measurement dashboards?**

- Are your **delivery schedules** becoming more and more compressed?

- Do you have your **customer's demand for something new and creative?**

If you answered even one question affirmatively, you may find that Agile Development is right for you.

Before we get into the details of this, let's know more about the need for an Agile Workforce.

Shape Workforce agility is more important than ever. Increasing competition, shrinking product life cycles, evolving customer interests, and business disruptions have accounted for organizations to either become agile or eventually diminish. This is so because today's operations will become tomorrow's business obstacle.
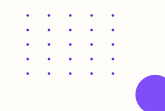
"Agile is the ability to **adapt and respond** to change. Agile organizations view change **as an opportunity,** not a threat."

Jim Highsmith
Author, The Agile Manifesto

When an organization works towards altering the direction or adjusting quickly to operate successfully in an unprecedented situation, it's the mark of an agile workforce in action. An agile team swiftly responds to changing needs of customers, marketplace, products, and employees.
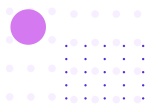
People and Agility– Why Focus Here

A **bunch of questions that cross the mind of every business leader** at least once in the day are –

- How to sustain amidst non-stop changes?

- How to react – and react effectively?

- How to master the art of operating at the moment?

Experts say that **placing the right people in the right places and at the right time is not sufficient,** especially in today's volatile business environment. This is where agility comes to their minds.

In fact, they need to **hire people with flexibility and an agile mindset.**

The prime benefit of having an agile workforce is that it leads to an agile organization. **Any business that offers agility to their customers and partners develops a sense of trust that ensures,** in case of any unexpected requirements, they can be critical in dealing with such circumstances.

Not only do leaders and top managers need to exhibit agility, but also the employees at all levels of hierarchy.

And this is possible only **when employees feel empowered; develop multiple skill sets;** show a willingness to take on challenges, and are ready to experiment and innovate. In short, they need to be agile.

Agile is a mindset, a behavior – a constant one. Employee's mindsets exist on a continuum ranging from negative to positive, and there are specific measures that should be focused on to ignite an agile approach in them -

Focus on Retaining **Business Expertise**

Employees tend to move ahead in their careers to achieve specific career goals. When such high potential employees leave, teams feel frenzy until a replacement is found or the missing skills are acquired.

Such imminent situations can be avoided by identifying the right skills and working towards retaining the in-house talent.

With a system in place and consultation from experts, organizations can develop the capability to train replacements before they move on. This allows the new potential to step up and prepares them mentally for the upcoming opportunities.

Give Employees the Freedom to **Feel Empowered**

Many times while working in a team, there comes a situation when a task is delegated from one team member to another. Sometimes, this brings forward the notion that the employee must look for a leader's guidance to achieve the right outcome. Rather, they end up feeling anxious because of the expectations regarding the results of that task.

This is an underlying concern for leaders who must give their teams the liberty to take on challenges. Make them believe that they have the potential to take risks and move towards accomplishing what is expected. A set of habits that can help prepare for this are–

- Encourage **frequent role rotation**

- Autonomy to **perform a task on their own**

- Inculcate **leadership behavior**

- Stimulate **decision making**

- Allow them to **experiment and fail**

Increase Scope for
Experimentation

Innovation drives change, and it cannot be achieved without experimentation. Some of the most agile organizations allow their employees to experiment to bring-in new perspectives and creativity. With the current market being highly disrupted and open to change, companies must be able to propel change for competitive advantage.

Contemporary organizations allowing their teams to work on thoughtful activities and giving them the scope to experiment see rapid failure but long-term success. Such an approach builds the flow of ideas, encouraging a sense of freedom to try new things –

- Schedule **brainstorming sessions**

- Identify other **interests of employees**

- Encourage employees to **work on their ideas**

- Offer necessary **support and remove obstacles**

"Around **81% of executives are changing their workplace policies** to offer greater flexibility to their workforce."
LinkedIn's Workplace Learning Report 2022

Being Agile, Being Future-Proof

Creating an agile work model is the way forward because of the market's appetite for newness and change acceptance. While businesses need to focus on **being agile and then be future-ready,** their main focus remains to expand the business and drive customer success.

So how can businesses supersede such scenarios?

They can start by roping in experts at early stages who can navigate through a smooth agile workforce transformation establishment procedure. In the long run, organizations must identify the right trends in the industry and work towards becoming future-ready. Here are some of the trends that companies have identified to stay agile.
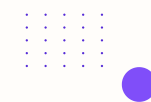
Look Within Before Seeking Out

Agility can be derived by looking at our inner strengths and using them to manage the changes occurring. Leaders and top managers need to sit down and organize strategy sessions to identify what their business already has that can help to smoothen the transition curve for employees. As soon as they figure this out, external factors can be considered to reach the ultimate organizational goal.

Embrace Technological Advancements

Technology change is inevitable, and we have seen this during the pandemic era. Mobile and Internet technologies have significantly impacted how businesses have been carried out recently. Businesses looking for agile workforce development must analyze how the current and emerging technologies can benefit their employees. Several organizations have seen tremendous success in their internal practices just by embracing technological progression.

Consider Future **Possibilities**

It is undeniable to look into what the future holds for your business. The future of work is already here, and it is invisible right now because of uneven distribution. The idea is to keep an eye on how the business is changing and, while considering an agile model, what needs to be anticipated to minimize business impact. It is better to prepare for it from the beginning and make necessary shifts rather than cope with the disruption later.

Accept Change & **Drive Towards It**

Agile organizations always have the upper hand in the disruptive market as they drive change rather than react to it. Innovation is the reason their workforce meets the expectations of the customers and markets first-hand. Once your workforce gets accustomed to it, you easily identify new ways of solving problems, establish industry benchmarks, and set business trends for others to follow.

Evolve Outside of Your
Core Offering

Undoubtedly the most uncommon and toughest trend to gain agility is to explore what more potential your business holds. This refers to the underlying area of focus that could help your workforce and business to gain higher traction and create an alternative brand image.
The objective of exploring outside the core offering is to showcase that the business offers agility to its functions and is not scared to take substantial steps to move forward.

"Success today requires the **agility** and **drive to constantly rethink, reinvigorate, react,** and **reinvent.**"

Bill Gates
Co-Founder, Microsoft Corporation
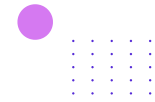
Assessing the Talent Agility Gap ——●

Organizations have always needed people to achieve its goals and objectives. A few years back, talent management was just a regular function of the HR department. Recently, it has evolved hugely into addressing employees' challenges, enhancing workplace culture, and career development. Only the currently changing business scenarios have seen the difference in resources that can respond to the changes rapidly and effectively.

To put it in a better way, businesses are looking for individuals who are agile in thoughts, actions, and mindsets — those who are flexible and can quickly adapt to frequent external and internal changes. This has given rise to a unique requirement of the HR function – **Talent Agility.**

It is the capability of creating and developing talent in such a way that they can withstand challenges and continue at the forefront of the competition.

It can also be termed as the commitment of people to make themselves future-ready for their employers by foreseeing changes and preparing to deal with it. From an organization's perspective, it is about the talent that –

●- Is equipped to perform in an **erratic business world**

●- Can **transform quickly** and **tackle change**

●- Is ready to go **beyond the call of duty**

●- **Uses creativity** to deal with unpredicted situations

●- Is a **self-starter and highly motivated**

Hiring such talent has always been on the top list for businesses; however, they have continuously missed out on developing and retaining those. Various studies have been conducted that show the **talent agility gaps within an organization that talent development teams need to look into proactively** –

- **A shortage of agile talent can impact an organization's capability to compete and innovate** to gain a competitive advantage

- **The right strategy, plans, and budgets** are required to acquire top-notch talent through diverse sources

- **A flexible workforce is a great asset for an organization** and relies vastly on its response to challenging times

- **The HR operations and procurement work together to lead a comprehensive talent strategy** for agile organizations

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Bridging the **Talent Agility Gap**

Human resources form the backbone of an organization. Any step they take in the direction of employee development directly influences the crucial aspects of the business. **Organizations that work towards bridging the agility gaps for their employees indirectly work towards making themselves agile.** Business agility can be measured through human instincts and behaviors, applied during times of disruption and successful business navigation.

Listed are some of the approaches that can help bridge talent agility gaps at a rapid pace –

Look for Highly
Flexible Talent

This is an effective approach to finding talent already equipped with expert skills and focused on earning quick money. These people are not looking for career paths or job securities; instead, they are focused on performing jobs to attain maximum output for the business. Employers generally get into a contractual agreement with these individuals to get faster results for their organization.

Develop Career
Development Roadmap

This approach is highly suitable for resources committed to the organization and are aligned with the ultimate goal of business success. These employees aspire to take up senior roles in the organizations and want to have a career roadmap defined for them. Employers work towards training them in new skills and preparing them for the future of business. This is one of the best ways to keep such individuals motivated and focused and has worked as a great business strategy to retain such resources.

Utilize Talent Using
Crowdsourcing

Mobile and Internet technologies have massively changed how businesses have worked in the last two years. Similar is the case for talent. People can now work for anyone and from anywhere worldwide and provide services at the price they need. Organizations, specifically, outsource the tasks that must be performed almost immediately and require high skills. The prime advantage of such an approach is that the hired talent is not a full-time employee; rather, they get paid only for the work that has been completed.

Conclusion

With an agile workforce, organizations achieve a competitive advantage. They win the **trust of their customers and partners** with quick query handling and providing rapid responses. Also, such organizations can effectively handle deviations from the initial project definition. **Their customers and partners know that these organizations are trend-setters and can establish benchmarks for their competitors.**

Furthermore, these organizations no longer require time to create strategies; instead, they react to the external landscape with a very flexible approach. The reason for **focusing on a flexible approach is quick decision-making amidst the transformation phase.** That's where an agile workforce and agile organizations make a real impact during business disruptions.

About
Infopro Learning ──●

Infopro Learning, a leading provider in corporate training and human capital transformation, helps organizations create an exceptional employee and customer experience through custom learning solutions. For more than 25 years, the company has designed and implemented engaging learning experiences that attract, develop and retain talent across the entire employee lifecycle. With offices around the world, Infopro Learning's technology platforms and governance models support organizations to improve business performance, at a reduced cost.

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