

Driving Growth Through an Agile Salesforce

Change is the only Constant

The realities of today’s business world is that everything is changing and selling today is no different:

- Strategies change quicker.
- Customers are better informed and what they value from sellers is different.
- The sales funnel is dead – the empowered customer has their own buying journey and the seller must meet them there.
- There is more differentiation in sales roles.
- Sales people change jobs more frequently than ever before.
- Technology, in particular social media, is everywhere.
- Prospects don’t answer their phones or return calls, or e-mails anymore.
- Customers don’t want to spend 40 minutes telling you about their problems.

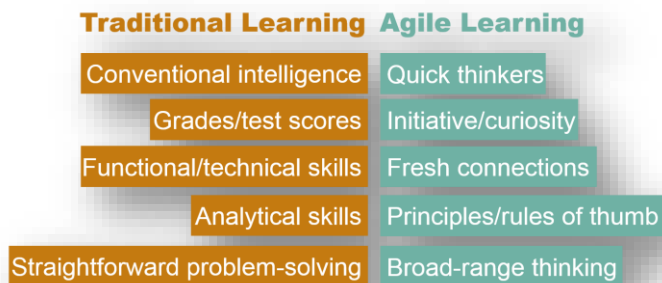
To grow and compete in a world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) it is essential to have sales teams that are generally nimble, constantly embracing change and correctly aligning their people to critical business strategies. These organizations with these types of leading sales teams focus on their **LEARNING AGILITY**.

WHAT IS LEARNING AGILITY?

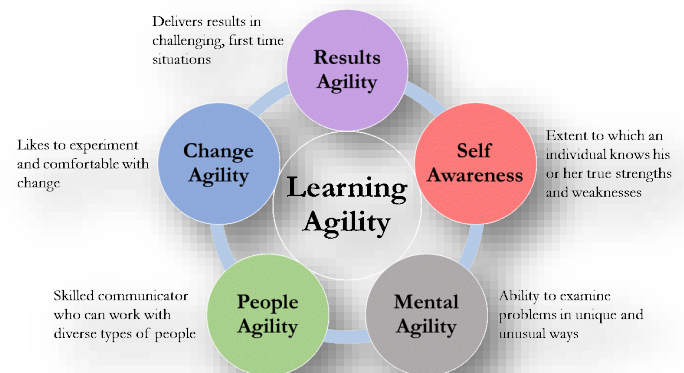
It is the **ABILITY** and **WILLINGNESS** to **LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE**, and subsequently **APPLY** that learning to perform successfully under **NEW** or **FIRST-TIME CONDITIONS**.

The Learning Agile:

- Seek and have experience **MORE DIVERSE EXPERIENCES** to learn from.
- Enjoy **COMPLEX PROBLEMS** and **CHALLENGES** associated with new client experiences.
- Get more out of these experiences because they have an interest in **MAKING SENSE OF THEM**.
- **PERFORM BETTER** because they incorporate new skills and behaviors into their selling repertoire.



THE FACTORS OF LEARNING AGILITY



In a recent survey undertaken by Korn Ferry, Chief Sales Officers stated:

- 37% of CSO’s have little or no doubt about bringing in their revenue target
- 41% of CSO’s believe their sales teams are effectively equipped to sell in today’s market.
- 31% CSO’s believe their sales managers are focusing on the right activities.
- While 91% of CSO’s believe that sales talent is essential to the success of their strategy, only **19% believe they currently have the right talent in place.**

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TIES DIRECTLY TO SALES PERFORMANCE – AS LEARNING AGILITY MATTERS

Salesforce team members who possess the characteristics of being learning agile:

- Are promoted twice as often as their peers.
- Advance closest to the top.
- Are 18x more likely to be viewed as having greatest potential to advance.
- Are rated more competent.
- Achieve greater success after a promotion to a new role.

KORN FERRY'S RESEARCH SHOWS (KORN FERRY INSTITUTE: www.kornferryinstitute.com)

- Learning agility significantly predicted long-term performance of sales managers that was reflected in both promotion rates and salary changes over a period of 10 years.
- Sales managers and sellers with higher learning agility not only achieved more career success, but likewise advance their careers faster than relatively lower learning agile individuals.

A Case Study

Mid-size pharmaceutical company on the East Coast with major changes to the organization and business model. Recognized that the changes were having a major impact on talent and that there were gaps in the salesforce capability throughout the organization.

CLIENT OBJECTIVES

- Grow a “nimble” salesforce in alignment with organizational strategy.
- Develop a mobile salesforce to fill territory gaps to mitigate competitive creep when territories are vacant.
- Fill gaps due to attrition, leaves of absence, and above hire right.

WHY WAS LEARNING AGILITY PART OF THE SOLUTION?

- Need for “nimble-ness”; specific need to hit the ground running, readily assume existing relationships, create new relationships, position one’s role with client and team, blend with the local team, and obtain immediate results.
- Integrate assessment “rigor” into the overall selection process.

APPROACH

- Create a learning agility profile of the ideal candidate.
- Administer learning agility self-assessment and analyze results.
- Stack rank candidate’s results against the profile.
- Aligned behavioral-based questions for the selection process.

RESULTS AND PLAN GOING FORWARD

- Learning agility was but one factor in the hiring process.
- 15 candidates considered, 10 selected.
- Current performance among salesforce:
 - 9 of the 10 mobile sales people are in the top 10.
 - They hold the top 4 spots in the salesforce.
 - They are energized and excited in their positions.
- Issue – local managers are trying to keep them

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING AND DEVELOPING LEARNING AGILITY CONTACT:

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