



**TRACOM® GROUP**

THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY®

# THE AGILE ORGANIZATION

FOUR WAYS AGILITY IMPROVES PERFORMANCE





Companies who invest in agility training acquire **significant advantages** over their competitors.

## WE'RE CREATURES OF HABIT

Throughout our lives, our collective experiences teach us ways of doing things that work, or at least work well enough. In fact, our DNA encourages us to develop habits and resist change. That makes it difficult to effectively respond to change and even harder to initiate the change that is often needed for long-term success.

Developing agility is a technique for overcoming these natural biases to seek out new ways of operating and to identify and act on opportunities for growth.

*At TRACOM, we define agility as “the capacity to recognize, create and exploit opportunities in a changing environment.”*

Companies who invest in agility training acquire significant advantages over their competitors. This is proven by a research study conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which found that

- Agile firms **grow revenue 37% faster** than non-agile companies
- Firms skilled in agility **generate 30% higher profits** than less-agile competitors

In addition to the growth and revenue that agility training has been proven to provide, organizations comprised of agile employees have higher rates of innovation. Agility training prepares professionals with the mindset they need to approach common corporate challenges with creative solutions and out-of-the box ideas. This ability to foster innovation helps more agile companies seize market opportunities when they arise.



## DOCUMENTING THE IMPACT OF AGILITY SKILLS TRAINING

The benefits of agility go beyond just innovation and embracing change. They have implications for almost every job function and department including sales, customer service and even the back office. High-quality agility training programs are specifically designed to make entire organizations more proactive, innovative, and creative. And, agility training provides practical techniques to effectively execute these changes.

This whitepaper examines four critical business areas where agility training can be a key success determinant:

①

CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

②

EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

③

INSIGHTFUL SELLING

④

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP





## ① CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

One of the biggest hindrances to business growth is internal reluctance to change, and in fact, IBM reports that the most significant challenges when implementing change projects are people oriented. People have cognitive biases and inherently negative mindsets, and this makes them fearful of the unknown. Topping the list are **mindsets**, **attitudes** and **corporate culture**. We don't know these biases exist so we can't overcome them without a new way of thinking. It's easy and unfortunately natural for us to become comfortable and complacent with the same routine patterns rather than taking advantage of new opportunities or changing circumstances. This decreases a person's cognitive flexibility, which is defined as "the ability to shift a course of thought or action according to the changing demands of a situation." This makes it harder for a person to reach their personal goals in life and often leaves them in a stagnant state. This inability to innovate also has lasting negative impacts on business organizations. Specifically, employees who are unable to enact positive change are more likely to be unfulfilled, disengaged, and unproductive.

### TOP BIASES THAT IMPACT CHANGE:

- ✓ MINDSETS
- ✓ ATTITUDE
- ✓ CORPORATE CULTURE





## Rater Research Overview

Fortunately, agility training helps people foster positive changes and help those around them do the same. In fact, TRACOM's research proves that **people with high agility are 22% more likely than people with low agility to see beyond normal patterns, processes, and conversations to identify opportunities.** Agility training provides people with the skills they need to test and strengthen their cognitive flexibility to endorse creativity and cultivate innovation. As a result, those high in agility are more willing to be proactive about speaking their minds, seizing new opportunities, and helping others do the same.

TRACOM's IDEA Model draws upon this research with its Energize dimension, which teaches people the ability to influence others, build coalitions, and mobilize support for new ideas. This agility strategy helps individuals generate personal change and also helps others do the same toward broader organizational goals. And as TRACOM's research shows, **people with high agility are 35% more likely to be viewed by others as a positive enactor of change.** Therefore, the link between agility training and the ability to enact positive change is clear.

To evaluate the importance and workplace value of agility skills, TRACOM conducted a study involving more than 400 people. This research compares people who have been profiled using TRACOM's Adaptive Mindset for Agility® Profile. People with low (undeveloped) agility skills are compared to people with high (developed) agility skills to see how agility skills relate to other common workplace skills. The percentage indicated is the difference between the high group average and the low group average for each agility question.

For example, a question asked raters to evaluate if learners are “seen by others as an initiator of change.” This study demonstrates the benefits of agility training on performance aspects in the workplace.

RATER RESEARCH QUESTION	IMPROVEMENT High vs. Low
Sees beyond normal patterns, processes and conversations to identify opportunities	22%
Makes high-quality decisions in the face of uncertainty	17%
Views failure as an important learning opportunity	22%
Seen by others as an initiator of change	35%
Is viewed by others as entrepreneurial	35%
Anticipates trends and future challenges/opportunities	24%
Seen as go-to person for innovation	33%
Is motivated to support new initiatives	24%



## CASE STUDY

# FUJIFILM

For decades Kodak was synonymous with photography. Their film and photo development services dominated the market, especially in the US. They even were among the first to research creation of a digital camera and had a prototype in 1975. But that project was shelved by upper management because it was deemed too much of a threat to their existing film business. Rather than acting on their new invention, they tried to maintain dominance and neglect innovation. Competitors soon discovered the digital camera as well, and these companies' executives weren't so timid to act on the new device.

Kodak eventually did enter new businesses including digital cameras, but its lack of agility continued to drag them down. They went through a bankruptcy in recent years and have significantly downsized operations.

FujiFilm emerged as a Kodak competitor during the last decades of the 20th century. As early as 1980, Fuji recognized that technology would dramatically affect its business and developed plans to wring profits out of its core businesses while diversifying into new markets. Some areas were natural such as the move to digital photography, but others required new ways of thinking and true agility.

Consider Astalift, a company that spun out of Fuji. It was created through research into alternative markets. Employees of FujiFilm discovered that some of the chemicals in film preservation also could offer protective qualities to skin via cosmetic products. Rather than waving off the discovery as irrelevant, upper management listened and ultimately decided to pursue a new market. Today, the company offers extensive line of cosmetics around the world and is a significant contributor in both revenue and profit.





A woman with glasses and a man are sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen. They are in an office setting with large windows in the background. The woman is on the left, wearing a red top and a brown cardigan. The man is on the right, wearing a grey suit jacket over a purple shirt. They are both looking at a laptop screen in front of them. The background shows large windows with a view of greenery outside.

## ② EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

To be successful, project managers must master the art of balance. After all, they have to stay on task according to the timeline, but they also have to be open and accepting of the fact that things might not go as planned. Project managers also have to be able to identify challenges before they arise, so they can make necessary changes when required. Put simply, project management isn't for everyone — especially people who haven't learned to modify their naturally negative mindset or become more predictive. However, agility training can play an important role in improving performance for project managers at any level.

*"The Unlocking Personal Agility™ program and techniques are extremely helpful. The pre-mortem exposes the shortcomings of a plan in a way I hadn't experienced before. And it allows you to address those issues before they become significant problems."*

CARLA WILLIAMS, VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES WITH SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS COMPANY SPENDIFFERENCE





People with high agility skills are **17% MORE LIKELY** to make high-quality decisions in the face of uncertainty compared to those without such skills.

To understand the benefits of agility training for project managers, let's look at the most important trait of project managers: flexibility. Most project managers face scope-creep at some point; it's an inevitable part of every wellplanned project. Under normal circumstances, project managers might react to scope creep by feeling stressed and uncertain. But agile project managers are better equipped to prioritize activities and get the project back on track as soon as possible. TRACOM's research revealed that **people with high agility skills are 17% more likely to make high-quality decisions in the face of uncertainty compared to those without such skills.**

In addition to these reactive skills, project managers with agility skills are also better at predicting future problems and adjusting the project accordingly. One essential agility technique titled "pre-mortem" teaches project managers how to see their team at the end of the project. Adopting

this predictive mindset allows project managers to identify future problems and consider their impact in order to make intuitive changes to the project scope.

An openness to failure as part of growth is another attribute of agile leaders as those who are agile are 21% more likely to view failure as an important opportunity. TRACOM's Agility IDEA Model provides people with the skills they need to transform failure into proactive action. Specifically, the Apply element of this model teaches project managers how to become stronger, bolder risk-takers. Participants also learn how to test and modify ideas and get more accustomed to devising new ideas in their daily work. As TRACOM's research shows, project managers with agility skills have the confidence they need to take advantage of the opportunities around them, therefore propelling their companies forward.





### ③ INSIGHTFUL SELLING

In many ways, successful salespeople develop the same skills as entrepreneurs: they seek out new business, they maintain strong client relationships, and above all else, they make choices based on the best financial interest of their business. Such traits are essential to successful selling, and agility training is one of the best ways to help salespeople refine them. Research by TRACOM shows that highly agile people are 35% more likely to be viewed by others as entrepreneurial than those who have low agility skills.

Consider a day in the life of an enterprise salesperson. Of all the clients they speak with, how many deals actually close? Typically the number of unqualified prospects and failed deals is much higher than the number of closed deals. With that in mind, it's true that a salesperson endures failure on a daily basis. The ordinary salesperson is likely conditioned to using the same tactics and sales strategies day in and day out. Even when one strategy doesn't seem to be generating as much sales as he or she might like, a salesperson is likely to keep using the same strategies because they are comfortable and safe. This is for the same previously discussed reason: people are preconditioned to avoid risk and uncertainty, thus salespeople are likely to stick to one sales strategy without taking risks and trying new methods of sales acquisitions. What if the new strategy is worse than the one currently being used? What if it makes him/her look bad? What if it's hard to learn or difficult to implement? These are the types of negative internal inquiries that hold a salesperson back.

People with high agility are **22% MORE LIKELY** than people with low agility to see beyond normal patterns, processes, and conversations to identify opportunities.

*"In today's working world, the ability adapt and innovate during times of change is fundamental to success. The demand for agility skills is significant and universal. Our leaders have identified these skills as critical to our business, and relevant to our people at all levels.*

*Understanding and applying these concepts throughout my career has been fundamental to my success. I believe an agile mindset is essential to achieving success in the changing environment of today and thriving in the world of tomorrow."*

NANCY HENSON KOPP, DIRECTOR OF SALES, EY



*Salespeople trained in agility are much more likely to identify and seize opportunities before they become trends.*

TRACOM's Agility IDEA Model teaches the Energize element, which is helpful for salespeople when influencing and inspiring others to support new ideas. As a salesperson, it's key to be able to energize buyers and get them interested in the idea of your product. Salespeople equipped with TRACOM's Agility IDEA Model achieve stronger selling skills, improved team collaboration, and more lucrative client relationships.

They are better able to identify new opportunities for sales, creating a customer-centric approach for collaboration. They can recognize how marketplace and technological changes create opportunities for sales rather than simply cutting traditional sales out of the buying equation.







## 4 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Having an agile workforce means little without having agile leaders. Most people tend to fear new opportunities because of the uncertainty they entail. This is often what holds people back from pursuing new jobs, moving to a new city, or trying a new activity that may be unknown. While many people stay away from the things they don't understand, this is actually the key to growth and progress. And when leaders are afraid of new opportunities, they hold the rest of their company back from market opportunities that could potentially make the business more successful.

On the other hand, leaders with agility skills are better equipped to manage unexpected situations and get ahead when times are tough. Leaders trained in agility are much more likely to identify and seize new opportunities when they arise.

**In fact, TRACOM's research found that agile leaders are actually 25% more motivated to support new initiatives.** Another benefit of agility-trained leaders is that they are better equipped to devise out-of-the-box ideas during mission-critical challenges. When employees are struggling or a major initiative has gone off track, leaders trained in agility are able to think of unique strategies for getting everyone back on track. This kind of innovation can be especially helpful when things don't go as planned. When other people in the organization are feeling frustrated about the future, agile leaders have the ability to identify new pathways towards success. As TRACOM's data points out, people with agility skills are 33% more likely to be seen as a go-to person for innovation. When a leader is more agile, they are more optimistic and supportive, which makes them better role models for the rest of the team.

Agile leaders are actually  
**25% MORE MOTIVATED**  
to support new initiatives and 33% more likely  
to be seen as a go-to person for innovation.







People with high agility are  
**35% MORE LIKELY**  
to be viewed by others as a positive  
enactor of change.

Having an entire leadership team comprised of agile individuals is undoubtedly an advantage for companies looking to become more competitive. To help leaders build an agile team, TRACOM's Agility IDEA Model includes the dimension of Design. This shows people how to better devise innovative ideas and work together to be more proactive. Leaders who learn this skill in addition to Investigate, another dimension of the Agility IDEA Model, are equipped to bring out the best in their teams. Organizations who participate in this model are fast-moving, thus they are more proactive at innovating than the companies around them. In turn, agility-trained organizations set the standards for their market and stay ahead of their competitors.







**ADAPTIVE MINDSET®**  
FOR AGILITY

## UNLOCK YOUR TEAM'S PERSONAL AGILITY

TRACOM's one-day Unlocking Personal Agility™ program uses the latest in neuroscience research to teach effective Personal and Organizational Agility. With a wide range of unique lessons and proven tactics for success, TRACOM's Unlocking Personal Agility program offers:

- A day full of innovative exercises and discussions led by TRACOM-certified facilitators
- Detailed solutions and applicable strategies for improving and enhancing personal agility
- Course material based on the latest in neuroscience and experimental psychology
- Tailored exercises for participants to address specific challenges they face on the job
- Tangible strategies for overcoming normal thinking and implementing core agility skills
- Multi-rater feedback to help participants see their strengths and weaknesses and gain actionable skill development

Help your team members develop the skills and strategies they need to become more agile, and watch as your entire organization becomes more competitive.

Visit [WWW.TRACOMCORP.COM/ORGANIZATIONAL-AGILITY-TRAINING](http://WWW.TRACOMCORP.COM/ORGANIZATIONAL-AGILITY-TRAINING) to learn more about the benefits of TRACOM's Agility Training Solutions.



### INVESTIGATE

Looking for opportunities to improve current services, work processes, or products.



### DESIGN

Generating concepts that lead to improvement.



### ENERGIZE

Influencing others, building coalitions, and mobilizing support for new ideas.



### APPLY

Being bold and risking making mistakes; putting a new idea into a practical plan, testing and modifying the plan, and making new ideas a regular part of the work process.



A woman in a white shirt is standing and presenting to a group of people seated around a table in a meeting room. A whiteboard with diagrams and sticky notes is visible in the background.

# ABOUT THE **TRACOM®** GROUP

## THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY®

The TRACOM® Group provides the “AH HAS” to people as to how and why they act and interact with the world around them the way they do. We do this by teaching people about the core elements of an individual: their behavior, their emotions and their mindset and the impact these elements have on them each and every day. We call these core elements Social Intelligence and most people are completely unaware the impact that these elements have in how they interact with others and how they frame what is happening in the world around them.

For more information, visit [WWW.TRACOMCORP.COM](http://WWW.TRACOMCORP.COM) or call (303) 470-4900 — (800) 221-2321 (U.S. only)

### REFERENCES

**MIT Study:** <https://www.raconteur.net/business/business-agility-is-fundamental-to-market-resilience>

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