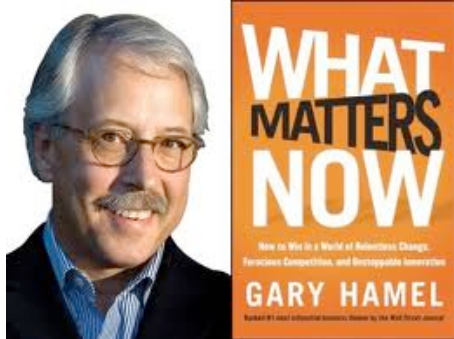


The Age of Agility!

By Tom O'Shea, CMC, Principal, Agility Consulting



It seems like every day there is a new article or study popping up sharing the latest evidence and awareness for the notion of creating more adaptive and nimble (aka agile) organizations, teams and leaders. We expect this to continue for some time because the “Age of Agility” is upon us! Gary Hamel, renowned Harvard professor now at the London School of Business, may be the best framer of these dynamics in his latest book entitled [What Matters Now](#).

Hamel shouts out for much more “adaptability” in organizations and says “we live in a world that seems to be all punctuation and no equilibrium, where the future is less and less an extrapolation of the past. Change is multifaceted, relentless, seditious, and occasionally shocking. In this maelstrom, long-lived political dynasties, venerable institutions and hundred-year-old business models are all at risk. Today, the most important question for any organization is this: Are we changing as fast as the world around us? Most CEO’s would have to answer NO.”

As we travel this country and beyond, it is becoming increasingly clear that there are many organizations and leaders who are no longer able to compete. It could remind you of what it looks like at the neighborhood fitness club on a Saturday morning: the courts filled with wounded weekend warriors who once were really talented “superstars” playing against the younger, faster, more agile next generation. In business, it is not an age thing ... it is an adaptability, nimbleness and learning thing. ADAPT and THRIVE. Don’t, and your organization will die or become obsolete in some fashion.

[FORBES BLOG - "Accelerated Obsolescence by Stacey Philpot"](#) – This recent blog raised some disturbing ideas that seem to be part of our future. The article describes some of the challenges of competing in the technology industry and highlights the need for rapid transformation at BlackBerry – the one-time leader in smart phone market share. You need not look any further, for examples of a volatile, uncertain, complex or ambiguous environment, than this industry.

The article goes on to provide a provocative quote from Yale University Professor Richard Foster: “...by the year 2020, more than three-fourths of the S&P 500 will be companies that we have not yet heard of. Of course, that means that **only one-quarter of the companies currently on the S&P will still be there in seven years.**” Talk about WOW ... 2020 is not that far away! The nature of change has changed ... are you ready for this ride?

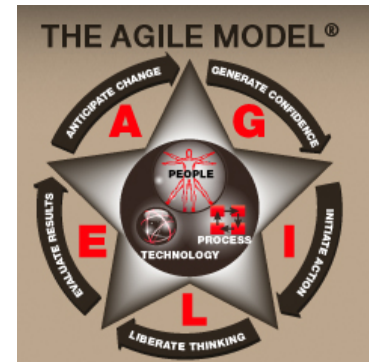
**STANDARD
& POOR'S 25%**



Two other published articles this past month add further perspective and texture to the growing body of knowledge in the field of organizational and leadership agility. The Jan/Feb edition of HR Executive magazine devoted the front cover and feature article to one that declares [“The Importance of Agility”](#). The article lays the context for the importance of agility in a fast paced VUCA world and places the emphasis on building “learning agility” in leaders and across the organization.

The UNC Kenan Flagler Business School also published a white paper entitled [“Developing Leaders for a VUCA Environment”](#) by Kirk Lawrence. This white paper provides another reinforcing assessment of the clear context for leadership in the “Age of Agility” and references our framework for how to compete and succeed. An even more extensive study and report about organizational agility from the Project Management Institute was recently published ... which Nick will address in his article.

So, by all reports we are operating in the “AGE OF AGILITY” where organizations and leaders across the globe are searching for answers on how to adapt and thrive in this age. That is the mission for our firm and the Strategic Agility Institute ... to be the global resource for building understanding and practical tools that help organizations and leaders THRIVE in a VUCA World. The drivers and core processes embodied in [The Agile Model®](#) continue to represent the best roadmap for building the capability to sense and respond better and faster in the AGE of AGILITY. We invite your stories and your perspectives



Agility Consulting, LLC

Helping Clients Become Focused, Fast & Flexible
1901 Rosevilla Lane Greensboro, NC 27455
o-336.282.1211 c-336.337.8656 f-336.282.4382 skype-osheatom
tom@agilityconsulting.com www.agilityconsulting.com

March 2013