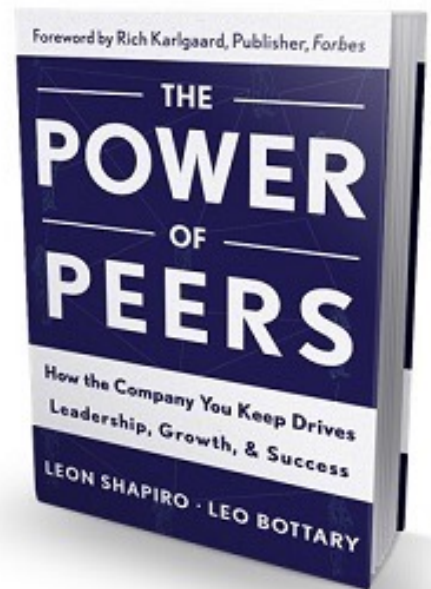


Peering into Team-Agility & Talent-Agility: A New Tool for HR

By Mike Richardson, Team Agility Practice Leader



I love chairing peer groups as they are extremely powerful in parting the curtains and giving us a glimpse into deeper levels of team-agility and talent-agility. There is nothing quite like the moment of truth in which the peer group team has created such a safe, transparent and trusting place in which an individual participant can experience the beginnings of a shift in their talent and taking their game to the next level. Best of all, the whole team learns from the experience, taking away value individually and collectively, even though they were processing another participant's issue, challenge or opportunity. It becomes a reliable, predictable and repetitive cycle of win/win/win which spirals upwards, making new levels of talent-agility and team-agility possible.

This brand new book describes this powerful phenomenon and the journey from peer-influence to peer advantage – from ordinary levels of peer influence which the majority of teams might achieve to extraordinary depths of peer-advantage which only a minority of teams achieve.

I am quoted in several places in the book.

As part of my agility centered portfolio of work, I have been Chairing peer-groups with Vistage International for 12 years. As well, I am a Vistage Speaker for our groups globally (20,000 members in 1000 groups in 17 countries representing \$300 Billion in annual revenue and 1.8 Million employees) recognized as our community's thought-leading expert on agility. Whether Chairing or Speaking, I help our members understand the link between peer-advantage and agility-advantage through team-agility and talent-agility.



We've covered the mechanics of the process, but Mike Richardson describes what it feels like to be in the room and work an issue with a group:

"At the very beginning of the meeting, you notice that you're already past the garden-variety peer influence end of the spectrum. Things quickly crystallize though, and as they start to gel, we progress to the advantage end of the spectrum. You can feel it. You can taste it. You can see it. You can feel that different context, that different aura, the different gravity. It can start as early as the pregame stuff that's going on as people are connecting before the meeting formally begins.

Obviously, I think the differentiating moment between influence and advantage happens when you're in the middle of discussing a complex issue, or what I like to call a *wheelspin* issue. It's so tangled that this member may well have been spinning their wheels on it for quite some time, and here we are in the middle of it and there's just something very powerful that it may not sound like it or look like it or even feel like it to an outsider, but to an insider, you know there's something very special happening. It's quiet when it needs to be, it's noisy when it needs to be; we are in the moment, we are very present, we are listening and looking, and you can feel the epiphany is coming and you can see, hear, and feel things shift.

It may not be a singular earth-shattering comment or question or idea from anybody. It's not always sharp, it's often blunt. It can be just the compounding effect of the member who's being listened to for thirty- five, forty- five, sixty, ninety minutes, and being appreciated and cared for. After the member has taken a moment to reflect, we say, "What have you heard and what's resonating with you?" They'll say something like, "You guys have left such a footprint and impact upon me, I can't tell you how big an impact all of this is.

Lightbulbs come on in my head in some way, shape, or form, and I think it's that depth, it's that height of shift—and it takes time to get there, although it happens a lot faster than you might think. I think that's the advantage. You can't buy that. You can't get that. You have to invest in that and then, you belong to it. You've earned the right to be part of it and it shows up."

The passion and energy of Mike's words are palpable. This is just one example of what makes the peer advantage experience so powerful. In essence, there are few, if any, forums in which CEOs can sit down with a group of people and be totally honest and vulnerable without having their guard up. The CEOs who want to avail themselves of that kind of forum trust one another enough to create it. With each passing meeting, there's a little bit of extra trust, an increased willingness to be open—and the more people do this, the more trust builds in the group. It creates the necessary atmosphere of emotional and intellectual safety so necessary for this kind of experience.

As our team-agility practice leader in **Agility Consulting & Training**, when facilitating client CEOs and their teams to develop their agility-advantage, I also love introducing them to the power of a peer-process to leverage peer-advantage. It gives them a glimpse into deeper levels of trust, transparency and teamwork for higher levels of talent-agility and team-agility at the core of their enterprise agility. As a result, I have seen participants transform their leadership presence, how their leadership is perceived by their peers helping transform teamwork to the next level and transforming their careers with promotions and other opportunities.

Not surprisingly, one of the best practitioners of this is Vistage International itself as a corporation. Vistage just got ranked #7 in the world by **Training Magazine in their annual list of Top 125 organizations for training and development**, by comparing statistics such as the number of training

Mike Richardson, who has been guiding and speaking to groups for more than ten years, told us that he challenges his CEOs to face the future head on: "I ask them: How are you going to future proof your- self? How are you going to be recession ready? How are you going to do all of that in an increasingly time-compressed world that is accelerating all the time? If you think it's difficult now, just wait twelve months or even twelve weeks."

Richardson believes strongly that the only advantage that has any permanence these days is agility. "Everything else is increasingly temporary," he says. "If you want to have an agility advantage, you better have a peer advantage because they are inseparable. The best place to develop that advantage of agility is in a group of your peers, which is filled with such diversity and such a good process that it actually gives you a fighting chance to survive and thrive in the VUCA world."

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hours per employee annually, workplace surveys, financial investments in employee development, and how closely such development efforts are linked to business goals and objectives. This is the 5th time that Vistage has made the list.

The other day I was Chairing a peer group of new Vistage employees as part of an all-employee training and development day. I had never met the participants before and they had never been in a peer group before, collectively or individually.

Only 3 hours later (of our issue-processing/executive-session format) they had moved from peer-influence to peer-advantage, evidenced by the way they described the impact of our time together at the end of the day, how their relationship as a cohort team had changed and how they individually had more courage and confidence to navigate issues, challenges and opportunities they face. Talent-agility and team-agility at the heart of enterprise-agility, with peer-advantage becoming agility-advantage.

**Vistage's Chief Human Resources Officer, Michael Molina says,
Beyond other facilitated team-building options, Peer Groups are a new tool for HR from which to**

“Leveraging the power of peer groups inside our own organization, for accelerated learning and growth of our talent and our teams has been huge, helping us achieve our ranking in Training Magazine’s Top 125. We are blessed to be able to practice what we preach, continuously investing in moving our organization, our teams and our leaders from peer-influence to peer-advantage. We engage all employees in peer group experiences from the top with the C-Level executive team and throughout the organization at all levels. Our peer-advantage has become an agility-advantage, helping us accelerate our growth nationally and internationally, just surpassing 20,000 members.”

leverage talent-agility, team-agility and enterprise agility, to go on the journey from ordinary levels of peer influence which the majority of teams might achieve to extraordinary depths of peer-advantage which only a minority of teams achieve. Indeed, we leverage Agile Peer Groups as part of our agile transformation process.

Join myself and my Agility Consulting & Training colleagues at Human Capital Institute Summit in New Orleans March 29-30 to find out more. The theme of this event is:

Agile Talent Strategies for Managing Change and Shifting Priorities: Is your talent management strategy adaptable enough to quickly switch gears as business conditions change? In just two days you will learn how key agile practices can help develop your workforce to fill talent gaps, provide a collaborative platform for driving innovation, and better align your initiatives to business goals.



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Agile Talent Strategies for Managing Change and Shifting Priorities

Business agility is the ability to quickly read and act on signals of change by adapting goods and services to meet new customer demands. To support this agile state, organizations must be really good at continuously testing and learning how to do new things through systems that are adaptive and flexible.

Agile organizations have found ways to quickly and regularly experiment with products, services, and new processes, while discarding many long held business strategies that were originally conceived in anticipation of a stable and non-volatile environment. HR must now step up and lead the organization through unpredictable and changeable times. Successful HR leaders who provide meaningful collaboration, quick development of workforce skills, and the correct identification of future leaders, create a competitive advantage by aligning these agile processes to shifting business goals.

Current processes are not able to keep up with the pace of change in business. How do you compete in markets that won't stand still?

The 2016 Summit will help guide HCI members through this critical HR transformation by sharing best practices, tools, programs, and platforms to implement agile practices.

Tremendous success can be found with a simple change or a new approach – if agility is a new concept to your organization, you'll still reap the benefits by introducing even a single process to your talent strategy.

Is your talent management strategy adaptable enough to quickly switch gears as business conditions change? In just two days you will learn how key agile practices can help develop your workforce to fill talent gaps, provide a collaborative platform for driving innovation, and better align your initiatives to business goals.

Meet Our Speakers

See All



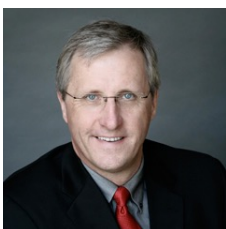
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