

Leadership Agility: The Johnny Football Way!

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Whether you follow American college football or not, there is a chance you might have heard about the latest sports phenom named Johnny Manziel – the freshman quarterback at Texas A&M University who won the coveted Heismann Trophy and put on a dazzling display in the 2013 Cotton Bowl against powerhouse Oklahoma University!

He has been affectionately dubbed “Johnny Football” because he embodies special qualities of speed, uncanny capacity to sense and respond better and faster than others around him along with a special creative inventiveness to develop game winning solutions even under very adverse circumstances ... like when they beat Alabama – then #1 team in the nation. In addition to his extraordinary individual skills and abilities, Johnny Manziel also embodies the leadership character and drive to generate confidence bringing the best out in all of his teammates and even his coaches!



Watching Johnny Manziel perform recently brought to mind the kind of creative leadership agility we strive to grow and develop with our client organizations. It is very clear that the context for leadership is getting more and more challenging as the VUCA nature (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) of our world increases with greater pace.



There are some valuable insights captured in the 2010 IBM Global CEO Study involving interviews with 1500 global CEO's and subtitled [Capitalizing on Complexity - IBM Study](#) which highlight the burgeoning complexity transfixing many organizations and paralyzing many leaders.

Three critical conclusions from the study are reflected in this illustration wherein the CEO's pointed to the importance of building much greater "organizational dexterity", reinventing the nature of customer relationships (internally and externally) and also searching for and developing leaders who can embody the kind of leadership agility we described above with our Johnny Football discussion. The research reinforces the core drivers in our AGILE MODEL® ... building the dynamic capacity to anticipate change, generate confidence, initiate action, liberate thinking and evaluate results.

Recently, we met with the head of leadership and organization development for a large, global client organization. Like many others in similar roles, she sees real challenges in shaping and developing leaders who can adapt and thrive in this climate ... particularly in highly matrixed operating environments.

Questions abound ... where is the high impact focus area for 2013? Should the emphasis be on leadership competency models and learning new skills; creating new-age corporate universities to ensure understanding and alignment around company values and strategy; growing understanding and use of project and change management disciplines; expanding knowledge and skill in leadership communication and internal social media applications; placing great emphasis on high-impact leadership coaching initiatives? Well, there is no singular answer ... all of the above are highly desirable ingredients in building great leaders and great teams to win championships in

increasingly competitive corporate and organizational landscapes. The truly critical ingredient begins with the senior most executive recognition and commitment that organizational and leadership vitality is important ... requiring constant nourishment.



What does your version of “Johnny Football” look like in your organization and do you have commitment to finding and growing great talent and leadership creativity that understands how to build "organizational dexterity" and the notion of refreshing and reinventing customer relationships? If not, then I believe you need to be seriously concerned about the future competitiveness of your organization. The complacent will not survive in the VUCA world.

As we begin the new year, it is already clear that 2013 will be a year filled with reruns of old fiscal dramas along with an avalanche of yet to be determined volatility. Now is the time to pull leadership teams together if you have not already done so and build out some “scenario plans” for possible 2013 drama in your world and consider some of the following factors:

- How can we better anticipate some of the changes we could face this year ... what if ... then what? How do we engage our leadership teams to develop poise and perspective?
- How can we build even greater confidence within our team, with our suppliers and that our customers or consumers have with us? How can we create a more positive and less fearful climate at all levels?
- What do we need to get “better and faster” at this year so we can initiate action more proactively with a shared sense of urgency at all levels in our organization?

- How do we build greater commitment to creating and implementing fresh, innovative ideas throughout the organization?
- How can we redefine success and evaluate the kind of results that truly matter for building a high performance and accountable organization?

I think if we can focus on building that kind of organizational agility ... then we can face whatever comes at us and build our individual confidence to success ... just like Johnny Manziel! If you would like to learn more about THE AGILE MODEL® and creating this kind of capability in your organization or to share a comment, please reach out to tom@agilityconsulting.com or contact me at 336.282.1211.



Happy New Year!



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