

Mobile Technology as an Enabler of Agility

By: Nick Horney, Ph.D., Principal, Agility Consulting
February 2014

A client with a Fortune 500 company recently told me a story showing how new technologies had transformed a decades-old rite of passage--shopping for a prom dress with her high school-aged daughter.

It began conventionally enough. They drove over to a major chain store, pulled some options off the rack and bunkered down in the dressing room. The teenager tried on a series of dresses and asked her mother and the sales attendant for feedback, but then she wanted a few more opinions. The daughter took digital snaps with her iPhone of the different outfits and sent them to a handful of her closest friends. Asking for their votes and vetoes remotely and in real-time, her in-store decision was hugely influenced by factors far beyond the four walls of the store.



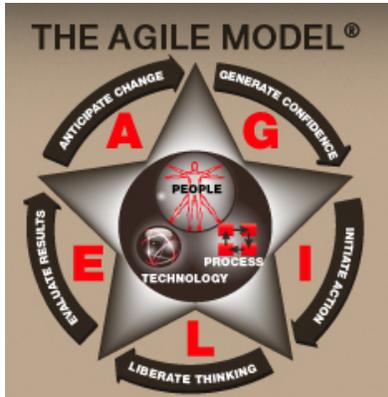
Online commerce has traditionally been seen as a challenge to brick-and-mortar retail, with some pundits predicting that desktop-browser "window shopping" would replace walk-in outlets altogether. But the advent of mobile and tablet technology has led to a new synergy between cyberspace and real world. Note that, by the end of 2013, smart phones and tablets have overtaken PC shipments. Downloads of mobile applications, or "apps," are expected to surge to 77 billion by the end of 2014.

Business leaders have long used information technology to improve productivity and efficiency, reach new markets and optimize supply chains. What's new is that customer expectations have also changed along with ease of access to information. Mobile barcode readers can scan physical products and compare price points and product details to those of competitors. Groupon has revolutionized the laws of supply-and-demand by aggregating individual consumers into bulk purchasers, awarding online consumers electronic coupons that can only be claimed in person. The mobile application Shopkick provides consumers rewards and exclusive deals when they physically walk into a participating store.

These developments are creating an exponential explosion in data, which, in turn, accelerates the demand for business leaders to be more agile and take full advantage of these shifts. At Agility Consulting, we call this [The Agile Imperative, the title of our forthcoming book](#).

So, how can executives and their teams stay flexible enough to adapt? Successful leaders are learning to dynamically sense and respond to these mobile technology and social networking changes in the business environment with actions that are **Focused, Fast and Flexible™**. We refer to this capability as [leadership agility](#).

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Anticipate Change -- How can leaders better prepare themselves and their workforce for mobile technology and social networking changes in the business environment?

Generate Confidence - What can leaders do to ensure a clear understanding by the workforce of how its daily work contributed to the company's strategy?

Initiate Action - How can leaders demonstrate and reinforce a sense of urgency and speed in the workforce?

Liberate Thinking - How can a culture of innovation be created in a firm?

Evaluate Results - What kind of performance metrics help support the implementation of leadership agility?

Join the Conversation: How do you measure up as an agile leader? Complete this 15-item quick assessment to see how you would rate yourself on the five leadership agility drivers listed above (<http://agilityconsulting.com/leadership-agility-profile-assessment/>).

Nick Horney is a principal at Agility Consulting. Since 2001, Agility Consulting has provided research-based tools and implementation support to build leadership and organizational capability to sense and respond to increasingly uncertain and turbulent business environment. Our AGILE Model® has been recognized by Forrester Research, *CIO Magazine*, *enterpriseleadership.org.*, the American Management Association, the Human Resource Planning Society and the authors of *Human Resource Transformation* (Davies- Black, 2008) as "pioneers in organizational agility" and the "best leadership model for our changing times." Contact Agility Consulting at 336-286-7250 or www.AgilityConsulting.com.