



# Executive Briefing

---

*Agility: Unlocking the potential  
of Individuals and Teams*

Introduction: Business is changing	3
The pace is building	4
A fresh approach is needed	5
Our definition of agility	6
Defining agility	7
Unlocking potential	8
Insights into Agility	9
Measuring agility	10
Developing agility	11
About Morgan Philips Talent Consulting	12

“To stand a fighting chance in today’s hyper-competitive and constantly evolving business landscape, your organisation needs an agile workforce that can quickly adapt to challenges and change.”

*Charles-Henri Dumon*  
Founder and CEO  
Morgan Philips Group



# Business is changing

Not too long ago, the nature of business was much more predictable. You could plan ahead of time with confidence, leverage the benefits of cause-and-effect and utilise well established methods that provide comfort in doing “what has worked before”.

This stability provided the foundation for industry and big brands to flourish – capitalising on size and scale for mass production, driving hard on profit and increased productivity, while maintaining structure through “command and control” practices. Traditional organisations became established household names, flush with success and seemingly too big to ever fail.

However the paradigm upon which these “old world” organisations were established has shifted dramatically. The rise of innovation and disruption has added even more pressure for organisations to quickly adapt and change in order to survive. One only has to consider once successful household names such as Blockbuster, Kodak and Nokia to understand the impact of failing to adapt or evolve in response to a rapidly changing business environment. It is clear that businesses are facing unprecedented disruption and challenge to established organisational operating models, market globalisation, economic conditions, work attitudes and consumer expectations.

# The pace is building

Two thirds of business leaders believe the cycle of invention and innovation is speeding up in their markets. They recognise that change is both occurring and accelerating to an almost overwhelming rate.



## Exponential technology change

Technology-based digital innovations and disruptor businesses are pioneering change; challenging the “status quo” and transforming the expectations of consumers and employees as a result.



## Political, social and economic change

Market globalisation and geopolitical uncertainty has impacted businesses big and small, creating an overwhelming sense of uncertainty. Many businesses are experiencing great difficulty in understanding what the future holds and how they can adapt to new horizons.



## Changing attitudes to work

The workplace is becoming increasingly diverse, including now having up to five generations in active employment all with different attitudes regarding values, reward, lifestyle and motivational expectations.

## Why organisations are embracing agility

The concept of agility is near ubiquitous within the business sector. It can be applied to working structures, a profession, an aspiration, or a set of behaviours. Many organisational leaders have recognised the need for greater agility and utilised agile methodologies to ensure operational effectiveness and encourage the most efficient ways of working.

***Five years from now, most business leaders estimate that their companies will need to operate almost one third faster than they do today to remain competitive.***

While these techniques might be useful in promoting agile ways of working with more efficient systems, processes, technologies and structures, one of the biggest pain points business leaders come up against is encouraging greater agility in their people. That’s not to say they are poor performing, stubborn or uninterested; but rather, individuals or teams struggle to fully embrace the changing environments and challenges brought on by the new world of work.

## Top challenges organisations are facing

- > **Fear of change is lowering the performance of my talent**
- > **My team are focused on their past achievements-they’re not thinking ahead**
- > **I’m struggling to find people with the right level of experience who also understand technology**
- > **There is a sharp difference between my top performers and under performers**
- > **My team aren’t up to date with industry best practices, and they’re not interested in learning them.**



**of respondents believe the agility of their workforce is central to business success.**

*Morgan Philips Talent Consulting's Global Talent Survey, 2019*

# A fresh approach is needed

The new world of work has new rules and calls for a different kind of organisational player – someone who senses what is happening around them, then responds proactively and independently in ways that align with business purpose and objectives.

Identifying how to work with pace and nimbleness in this landscape is a critical component for modern day performance; enabling individuals and organisations to move swiftly towards achieving success and reaching potential.

In this context, agility is not only the ideal response to a rapidly evolving business world, it is more broadly an overarching attribute that shapes one's approach and ultimate success across a broad scope of activities.



## Our Agility model

*Our view on agility starts first at the individual level and then scales across teams, groups and the whole business. We seek to empower the huge potential of the individual to affect the whole – whether they reside in a traditional organisational hierarchy or not.*

*Our approach gets to the heart of what agility is... what it describes in terms of behaviour.*

“It’s not a new concept, but in a business world that’s continuously disrupted by change, technological innovation and differing attitudes to work, agility has become a must-have.”



*Dr. Dane Poboka, MBPsS  
Talent Solutions Director  
Morgan Phillips Talent Consulting*

# Our definition of agility

*‘The ability to work with insight, flexibility and confidence in response to challenging and changing circumstances’.*

“Agility requires physical and mental nimbleness. It is the ability to ascertain quickly your direction of travel, then respond with action that is purposeful and with the flexibility to adapt to whatever gets thrown at you along the way!”



*Tim Drake*  
Head of Consulting  
Morgan Philips Talent Consulting

## Inner and Outer Agility

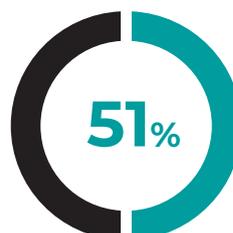
Our business activities are driven by what we think and do. Our Agility model comprises of an inner component - how we perceive and think about the business world, and an outer component - how we behave in response to that thinking.



**Inner Agility:** A person’s engagement and energy to marshal insights and build understanding.

**Outer Agility:** The ability to act with awareness and confidence, break new ground, and adapt as you go.

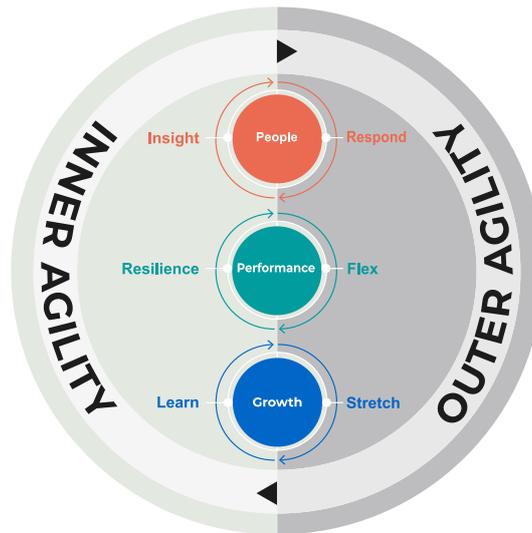
Maintaining balance between the two is critical to sustaining agility. Overly predominant thinking can lead to our insights and analysis never translating into operational plans, hitting ‘analysis paralysis’, or continually searching for deeper understanding when action is the path to greater clarity. Contrastingly, we can jump quickly to action (in pursuit of speed) before we have suitably assessed options and understood the available resources around us.



**51%** of respondents don’t measure agility at all, while 18% said they’re unsure if they do or don’t.

# Defining agility

Our Agility model takes three dimensions into consideration: People, Performance & Growth. Maintaining a balance across these dimensions and Inner/Outer perspectives ensures higher levels of Agility.

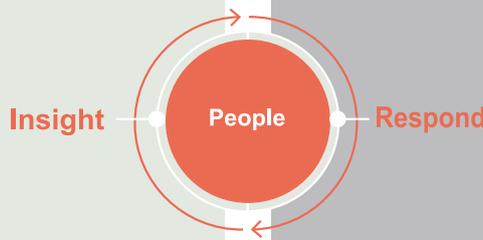


## Inner Agility

## Outer Agility

**People Agility : Understanding self and others, and acting with empathy and interpersonal insight to achieve results.**

Knowing yourself well enough to selfregulate by leveraging your own strengths and accommodating for weaknesses. It is being insightful of capabilities and emotional states of other.



Acting with empathy and understanding in order to achieve with, and through, others

**Performance Agility : Dealing with pressure, being resilient, flexing and adapting plans to meet objectives.**

Thriving in tough situations with composure, confidence and positivity.



Adapting and executing fluidly to changing circumstances, standing up to challenge and maintaining performance under pressure.

**Growth Agility : Openness to learn from experience and drive improvements.**

Framing challenges as learning opportunities and not fearing mistakes. It is to think with eagerness, openness and curiosity to personal and organisational change.



Driving for improvements with a fail-fast mentality.

# Unlocking potential

Morgan Philips Talent Consulting’s Agility model identifies Pace and Brake factors that impact potential. Your Pace factors are the areas of innate motivation and positive behaviour that accelerate your progress to achieving optimal performance. Brake factors are areas of non-preference, resistance and limiting behaviours that can slow your progress and the progress of those around you.



## Building Pace

Agility enables you to move towards reaching your full potential. It’s not just simply about speed – anyone can go fast. It’s about the combination of speed, consideration and efficiency working in balance. Your Pace factors accelerate your progress to achieve optimal performance. Shining a light on your Pace factors allows you to strengthen them, and draw upon them during challenging circumstances.

“Agility needs constant attention, adaption and refinement in order that it successfully orchestrates our varied experiences and talents in order to elevate performance.”

*Claire Prayag*  
Principal Consultant  
Morgan Philips Talent Consulting



## Releasing Brakes

Your Brake factors slow down progress towards realising full potential; taking longer to unlock capability and achieve full performance.

This perspective repositions the more traditional notion of a derailer – a behaviour that quite literally ‘knocks you off track’ – with a Brake merely slowing your momentum to your optimal performance.

Understanding Brake factors means building a fuller understanding of patterns of thought or behaviour that can work against you. With greater awareness of these and the slowing impact they can have, you are better equipped to make meaningful change.

# Insights into Agility

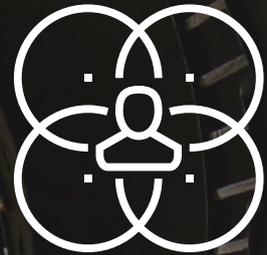
Consider the analogy of the 'goods' and the 'delivery'. Your skills, experience, knowledge, expertise and specialism are the goods. They are the attributes needed to reach your potential, but they need assistance to get there!

Think of agility as the delivery mechanism for your skills and attributes – defining how quickly, efficiently and effectively the goods are deployed.

## Agility is an overarching attribute

Agility should be considered as an enabler of performance based on a complex set of attitudes and behaviours that influence performance. The constituent parts of this model aim to practically unpick what is a complex set of attitudes and behaviours.

From an individual development perspective, attention to particular Agility areas of the model will help facilitate an overall improvement in performance.



## Agility is not fixed

Agility is informed and in some degree shaped by our natural preferences. However, it has the ability to shift and develop over time with increased experience and exposure to new challenges.

## Agility is not reasoning ability

It is not about outsmarting your competition, but rather outmanoeuvring them. It is the ability to deal with a changing context through thoughtful collaboration, a mindset of acceptance to the flux and a hunger to survive and thrive within it. This differentiates from other agility perspectives that include mental capacities to understand and integrate complex information.



“The agile mind knows its own capacities; it is attuned to the capabilities of others and can galvanise resources to achieve what they cannot achieve alone.”



*Katie O'Connor*  
Principal Consultant  
Morgan Philips Talent Consulting

# Measuring agility

**To identify and develop agility we must first measure it. Using our Agility model, we can scale the depth and rigor by which this is done.**

Our Agility model can be used together with our behavioural framework, or it can be equally effective when combined with pre-existing competency, behavioural or leadership frameworks. As such, it can be successfully integrated into existing assessment, development and learning centre initiatives.



## Measuring Inner Agility

Our unique Agilit. foundational level Selection and Development reports measure Inner Agility through psychometric profiling. As Inner Agility is focused on individual factors, self-report personality psychometrics offer valid and reliable preference data for the Inner Agility dimensions: Insight, Resilience and Learn.

The reports provide normed scores against multiple dimensions to measure an individual's interpersonal awareness, inner resolve to deal with tough situations and openness to learning. This helps both individuals and clients understand Pace factors that enable individuals to realise their potential and the Brake factors that can inhibit and require further attention and development. Our Agilit. Selection report provides interview questions that can be used to further explore an individual's agility. Our Agilit. Development report provides practical advice on how an individual can build on areas of strength and offers development recommendations.

## Measuring Outer Agility

To reach a full understanding of someone's overall Agility, the Outer Agility dimensions (Respond, Flex, Stretch) need to be explored. Our Agility interview process systematically builds from the Agilit. psychometrics to explore how interpersonal insight is leveraged to achieve optimal people performance; how resilience provides a platform for effective flexing to address emergent issues, and how a growth mindset can translate to 'raising the bar' for oneself and others.

The agility interview is a 60 to 90 minute process conducted by one of our certified in-house consultants, and can be used for both selection and development purposes in conjunction with the relevant Agilit. psychometric report. The self reported data is probed in greater depth and the work examples demonstrating Outer Agility (or agility in action) are surfaced and evaluated through carefully designed and executed structured interview methods.

The Agility dimensions can also be measured with the most rigour when observed through business simulations, both online and face-to-face.

# Developing agility

## Agility for individuals

Coaching enables individuals to discuss, explore and work on key aspects of their agility – to leverage Pace factors and ‘deep dive’ into Brake factors and the potential reasons for their existence.

Our coaches deliver targeted support to develop agility through one-to-one coaching sessions using our Agility model as the backbone, or central reference point, for leadership and talent development. This draws together diverse issues, interplays, emotions and beliefs into a unified model for optimal performance. In this way, agility areas can be explored in depth and with personal intensity, whilst consistently maintaining a focus on desired business outputs.

Agility also provides consistency that enables the delivery of coaching programmes across teams and organisations in support of strategic transformation and change initiatives.

## Agility for teams

Agile teams are not simply agile through their processes – it is the agility of the team member’s thinking and behaviours, both independently and collectively, that drives team agility.

Individual agility data can be aggregated to provide a group Agility profile which can be utilised to benchmark team performance through learning centres, experiential workshops and group coaching sessions.

Morgan Philips Talent Consulting has extensive experience of group facilitation for teams and can ‘unblock’ unhelpful habits and limiting beliefs. We believe agility has contagion – positive as well as negative momentum – and can snowball. When operating with agility, we pinpoint group brakes, challenge assumptions and build up collective pace factors that drive teams to higher levels of performance.

“Agility is not fixed, but dynamic. It can quickly be shifted, evolved and implemented in new ways.”

**Phil Jefferis**  
Principal Consultant  
Morgan Philips Talent Consulting



**of respondents either agree or strongly agree that making mistakes and learning from them is a key component of agility.**

*Morgan Philips Talent Consulting's  
Global Talent Survey, 2019*

# About Morgan Philips Group

Over the past few decades, our highly experienced team of organisational psychologists and talent experts have established an international reputation for delivering superior talent consulting, assessment and development solutions to the market.

Now operating under the Morgan Philips Group umbrella, our talent consulting experts are able to focus on five key pillars:



## Assess

Effective performance, potential and agility assessments to help you select and identify the right talent for your needs.



## Develop

Build talent, identify future leaders and help them to develop with training and coaching expertise.



## Consult

Create a data-driven talent strategy that sets your organisation up for success and benefit from our range of bespoke tools and services.



## Predict

Using your data, we will work with you to build predictive performance and succession analytics to identify optimum team models and drive your wider talent strategy.



## Transition

Working with individuals or groups of individuals to help them achieve a rapid return to employment.

---

## Our offices:

### **London**

Chancery House  
53-64 Chancery Lane  
London  
WC2A 1QS  
t: +44 20 7187 6000

### **Birmingham**

2 Snow Hill  
Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6GA  
t: +44 121 633 0010

### **Edinburgh**

1 Lochrin Square  
92 Fountainbridge  
Edinburgh  
EH3 9QA  
t: +44 131 555 4321

### **Glasgow**

130 St Vincent Street  
Glasgow  
G2 5HF  
t: +44 141 221 8182

### **Milton Keynes**

The Pinnacle,  
170 Midsummer Boulevard,  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 1BP  
t: +44 1908 489 100

### **Reading**

1st Floor, 450 Brook Drive  
Green Park,  
Reading  
RG2 6UU  
t: +44 118 939 1003

## Get in touch:

[morganphilips.com/talent-consulting](http://morganphilips.com/talent-consulting)