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Learning Agility, the 5 techniques to develop it

Adapting to change and applying ever-changing knowledge to resolve unusual situations in an innovative way is becoming increasingly sought after by companies. Here are the techniques to develop it

Companies, schools and businesses operate in a general context that appears to be constantly changing and rapidly expanding. Keeping up with the times is not a simple challenge, especially in a world governed by technology, which day after day accelerates every action and every communication of daily life.

Workers who work in these areas must be able to adapt quickly to **changes**. Even in the field of training and e-learning there are always numerous innovations affecting **learning methods** and teachers and trainers must keep up to date. For this reason their learning agility, i.e. learning ability, must be high.

What is learning agility?

Learning agility is the ability to acquire **new skills**, in order to be able to apply them in changed contexts that are different from the previous ones or those to which one is usually accustomed. The objective is to obtain adequate results, quickly responding to the new needs that arise in the various training and work fields. Learning agility brings together all those skills that allow you to adapt to change and learn to apply the knowledge learned to also use it in an unusual and different way depending on the situation you are faced with.

Readiness in dealing with an unusual circumstance is the ability that best distinguishes workers with learning agility from others. A person who possesses this quality, in fact, is able to face new contexts and unexpected events of all kinds, thanks to his greater ease to **embrace change**. Furthermore, her ability to change and deal with ever-changing situations will allow her to acquire a set of uncommon skills and a rich and varied experience, which will serve as her professional background. For this reason, learning agility allows you to be competitive in a work landscape that fits into a world that is constantly changing.

Learning agility represents a type of mentality, which is becoming increasingly important and more requested in the workplace and training fields, due to the digital transformation that companies and schools are undergoing. Flexibility, ability to adapt and predisposition to change are the elements that increasingly interest employers, because they guarantee the presence of people capable of dealing with different situations. In general, a person with learning agility should:

- Don't be afraid of **change**, new situations and unexpected events, which could, on the contrary, represent a stimulating challenge.
- Don't be discouraged by failures, which are a starting point for acquiring **new knowledge and gaining new experiences**.
- Be attracted by **novelty**, to continuously learn.

What is it for?

Learning agility allows workers to acquire new skills. This skill, therefore, serves the person to develop:

- Ability to **change**, to react quickly to new situations, whether internal or external to the company or the training environment. This will also allow the person to manage changes and transform them into opportunities, which can lead to innovation.
- Ability **to solve problems**, even in situations where you have not previously encountered or under pressure.
- **Relationship skills**, useful for collaborating positively with other people, so as to obtain benefits from both a work and personal point of view.

People with learning agility skills are therefore an added value for companies, which can count on individuals who are always in step with the times and equipped with innovative skills and ability to change, so as to be able to face any situation.

Why is it so important?

The importance of the presence, within companies and schools, of people with learning agility is linked to the continuous changes in the social and political landscape in which we live. The Covid-19 pandemic, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia and climate emergency situations continually call into question the priorities and programs of companies and training institutions. For this reason, to be competitive, companies must resort to the ability of workers inclined to adaptation and change, who know how to seize advantageous possibilities from every situation, who are able to reinvent themselves when necessary, in the face of the instability that characterizes our world.

Learning agility is important for the **success and competitiveness** of a company because, as already explained in a **previous article**, it helps people to:

- Face unexpected changes and unforeseen events positively;
- Cope with situations of uncertainty without panicking;
- Adapt to different company strategies and various training paths;
- Learn from mistakes, which are seen as an opportunity for improvement;
- Open up to innovative solutions and ensure the company remains in step with the times.

Learning agility represents an important tool for companies, which can count on people capable of dealing with new situations, in a continuous learning flow, which in turn allows the development of new skills. Learning agility is a fundamental point in a job market governed by change, by the redefinition of one's skills and by the increasingly concrete and widespread possibility of having to reinvent oneself. Growth is constant within one's career path, which passes through the learning of new knowledge and skills, in a spiral of continuous retraining.

For this reason, embracing learning agility allows a company to become **competitive** in the world of work, showing itself ready to face any situation.

The 5 techniques to develop it

For some people, learning agility is an innate quality or one that they have trained since they were children, perhaps thanks to family transfers or impulses received from school or sports clubs. This does not mean, however, that the ability to learn and adapt cannot be developed. To do this, it is necessary for the manager (or executive) to invest in creating the **right mentality** in their workers, so that they can face each new situation in the right way, without becoming discouraged and finding adequate solutions, even in the continuously chaotic and changing panorama in which we is often found working.

A last-minute delivery, an early deadline, a change of mind or needs on the part of a client, the upheaval of a study program or an exam method are all situations that need to be addressed on the spot. In these cases, to successfully resolve unexpected events and problems, it is best not to leave room for moments of crisis or panic, but it is necessary to act immediately, thinking of new strategies that can allow the team to face the challenge in an effective and advantageous way.

Allowing workers to acquire an adequate mindset is not an easy task and can take a long time. However, in order to best develop learning agility, the manager can follow five strategies:

1. **Boost** your employees, highlighting their strengths and focusing on the positive and unique characteristics of each worker. An employee who feels indispensable to the company and who sees their abilities adequately recognized will be more inclined to actively spend themselves for the success of various projects.
2. **Encourage discussion** between employees and between employees and the manager, organizing team building moments that promote knowledge and develop workers' ability to get involved in situations different from what they are usually used to. Creating discussion groups also allows people to discuss various topics, to find innovative solutions to a specific unexpected event. To create an effective working environment it is best to encourage your employees to actively participate in the life of the company, encouraging them to share their work, their ideas and even their doubts.

3. Organize learning webinars and **e-learning courses**, to guarantee employees adequate and updated training for a system that is constantly evolving. These are also important opportunities to collect feedback from workers, who can provide fundamental suggestions to make the company more competitive.
4. **Test new ideas**. To develop the agility that allows you to work adequately in a context characterized by unexpected events and frequent changes, it is necessary to explore new strategies and learn innovative techniques. Developing and testing new ideas can prepare you to face future challenges. It is normal, in this process, not to always be successful, but to find yourself having to experience failure. To keep the motivation of their employees high and to make them capable of adapting even in the most difficult situations, it is essential that the manager does not demonize failure, but transforms it into a constructive challenge.
5. **Set a first-person example**. The manager is the first to have to put the learning skill into practice. For this reason, he must make his employees understand that he knows how to deal with failure in a positive and proactive way, demonstrating his ability to get involved and deal with failure in a positive and proactive way.

Bottom line

Learning agility represents, in the contemporary panorama, a fundamental quality in the workplace and at school. As we have seen, this ability cannot be reduced to a specific skill, but must be understood as a lifestyle and a way of managing situations.