

# Learning Agility

## An overlooked leadership competency?



Here at **Ashfield Insight & Performance** we believe that traditional learning and problem solving strategies can work well when success is based on existing knowledge and experience. However, when the right answer or course of action is not at all apparent, what should we do?

### IN TODAY'S INCREASINGLY DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT



**Why is it that some leaders adapt and thrive more readily than others?**



**When faced with new challenges, problems and issues, what separates the once successful from the still successful?**

The answers to these questions could well provide the key to unlocking an often overlooked competency, which is more important now than ever before.

And that is why **Ashfield Insight & Performance** have a qualified consultant specialising in Learning Agility. Gary can be contacted via [Gary.Steeples@ashfieldhealthcare.com](mailto:Gary.Steeples@ashfieldhealthcare.com).

For the past 7 years, renowned organisational psychologist Warner Burke and his team at Teachers College, Columbia University, have been studying the mind-set and skill-set of those leaders who thrive in such situations. Through their research, Professor Burke and his team have identified nine facets that characterise those individuals. Collectively these facets constitute an individual's Learning Agility.



These are behaviours which our **Ashfield Insight & Performance** team of performance consultants believe in living and breathing. We continually work to embrace these with our clients and through our day-to-day interactions with them.

**'Organisations that truly embrace a growth mindset are recognising, developing and harnessing Learning Agility for commercial advantage.'**



- Warner Burke's team's research findings support the view that Learning Agility is a mind-set AND corresponding collection of practices that allow leaders to continually develop, grow and utilise new strategies. This will equip them for the increasingly complex problems they face in their organisations.
- It makes sense that leaders must have Learning Agility in order to quickly and accurately determine the best course of action. So, what does it mean to be an agile learner and how can a leader become more learning agile?
- The answer lies in a combination of awareness, understanding and action. Those wishing to assess their current level of Learning Agility can do so by contacting Ashfield Insight & Performance.
- Our certified Burke LAI coach can help individuals or teams understand the comprehensive report generated from the inventory, offering individuals insights into their level of Learning Agility across all nine facets and as a whole. The structured feedback within the report can then support individuals in building on strengths, addressing critical weaknesses, and practicing skills and strategies for improving their own Learning Agility.

Recent research with healthcare leadership shows that the Burke Learning Agility Inventory™ (Burke LAI) Total Score is a strong predictor of results orientation (driving aggressive goals to strategic targets) for mid-level and senior leaders.<sup>1</sup>

**Correlation = .31 p < .01 N = 74.**

The same research found that the Burke LAI Total Score correlates with business growth (Changing approaches to optimise outcomes).

**Correlation = .25; p < .05; N = 73.**

Both results orientation and business growth are measures of business outcome, indicating that the Burke LAI is a valuable instrument in the prediction of business outcome and leadership success.

**Ashfield Insight & Performance** believe Learning Agility is one of the most exciting concepts in the field of leadership and talent management today. We can all endeavour to be more learning agile. We can take more risks and challenge the status quo, seek feedback and reflect on lessons learned. We need to try to do all of this while resisting the temptation to become defensive, rigid or reactive, especially in the face of criticism or other challenges.

The great news is that Learning Agility is NOT learning ability. It is a competency that we can actively develop given sufficient insight and the right strategy. The extent to which we are able to do this will have an impact not only on who we are today, but also on who we can become tomorrow.



1. Burke Learning Agility Inventory™ Predicts Leadership Success, Expert Advocates in Selection International, LLC (EASI-Consult\*), March 2017