

RGP

To the Power of Human™

Human Agility in the **Now of Work**

Like waves rushing toward shore, the forces of change never stop. Rather than fighting the inevitable turbulence, how can you overcome obstacles and take advantage of these forces to power your own forward momentum?

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A Model for **Human Agility**

1) Executive Summary

2) How to Navigate Change

- Distributed Leadership
- Culture of Flexibility
- Resilient Operations
- Nimble Finances
- Continuous Listening

3) Sustaining Human Agility at Scale

4) Conclusion

5) Acknowledgements

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How can you harness the forces of disruption,
instead of fighting against them?

Kate Duchene

CEO, RGP

In times of disruptive change,
companies need more than
operational agility to keep their
business running — **they need
human agility as well.**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Harnessing the **Forces of Disruption** to Innovate & Grow.

An essential skill during the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be the ability to **see change**, not as a burden or threat but **as an opportunity for growth and innovation**.

Macro events like the dot-com crash, the 2008 economic crisis, climate change and the COVID pandemic are global in nature, forcing companies of all sizes across virtually every sector to rapidly adapt. But it's not just unexpected, "Black Swan" events like the pandemic that present extraordinary challenges. Even when expected, change creates turbulence and uncertainty.

The term disruption seems almost synonymous with a form of Darwinism, imposing the rules of nature on man-made markets to justify turbulence. But what does that mean about the companies left standing? Are these the survival of the fittest? And if so, what—in this world of constant disruption—makes a company fit?

With that in mind, how can organizations successfully rise above obstacles presented by disruption and realize the benefits of positive change? How agile are workforces across industries? **How will companies nurture the workforce of the future by building the workplace of the future?**





Disruption: of Latin origin,
formed by combining dis,
"apart" and rumpere "to break."

Exploring the Secrets of **Thriving Through Disruption.**

To explore how organizations can shift their perspective to view disruption as a profound opportunity for innovation and growth rather than an obstacle to overcome, we engaged a select group of business leaders in a research study combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Focusing predominantly on the C-suite but representing a variety of roles across all Fortune 1000 industries, **we asked two key questions:**

1

What fear or obstacles do businesses need to overcome in order to realize the benefits associated with adapting to change?

2

How do organizations redesign their workforce and workplace strategies during a time of constant change?



In many ways, our research reveals that what equips businesses to thrive through disruption mirrors the characteristics that enable humans to survive. **So, how can companies become agile enough to not only survive, but thrive?**

Agility is the answer.

Companies with a deep-rooted **culture of innovation**, fueled by an **agile workforce managed with empathy**, are more likely to **experience benefits from macro events** and **encounter fewer obstacles**.

DISRUPTION



Adopting a Model for **Human Agility** in the Now of Work.

What emerged from our research is a recipe for agility—one demanding that organizations disrupt themselves through radical empathy. This is characterized by democratization of power, broadly distributed knowledge, nimble financial mindsets, and a culture of flexibility. All this relies on a foundation of Continuous Listening, powered by a variety of channels that leaders tune into for insight.

Taken individually, these factors might seem to deliver only incremental value, but when viewed holistically, the cumulative impact is significant. **The more an organization adopts these characteristics of agility and infuses them into their people, processes and technology, the more benefits they realize and value they create.**

Business Agility & Resilience.

- Organizations with leaders who embrace innovation experience **16% fewer obstacles**.
- Companies that lead the surge in innovation, changing faster than their peers or competitors, **realize 11% more benefits** during major change events than those that do not.
- Companies that rapidly respond to market conditions **achieve 12% more benefits**.
- Companies whose leaders and employees are aligned on enterprise objectives, organizational goals and future-state vision **experience 12% more benefits**.
- Companies that are typically successful with change initiatives **experience 10% more benefits**.

Flexibility, Diversity & Empathy.

- **59% of research participants** say their company supports alternatives to the traditional 9-to-5 work day.
- Organizations that actively increase diversity **experience 18% more benefits**.
- Companies that actively invest in workplace **experience see 12% more benefits**.

KEY FINDINGS

Obstacles & Benefits to Change.

Organizations that embrace the characteristics of human agility detailed in this model realize more benefits and experience fewer obstacles. Here are the **top 10 benefits and obstacles that our research participants mentioned most often.**

Top 10 Benefits to Change

(ranked in order of frequency of mention)



Top 10 Obstacles to Change

(ranked in order of frequency of mention)

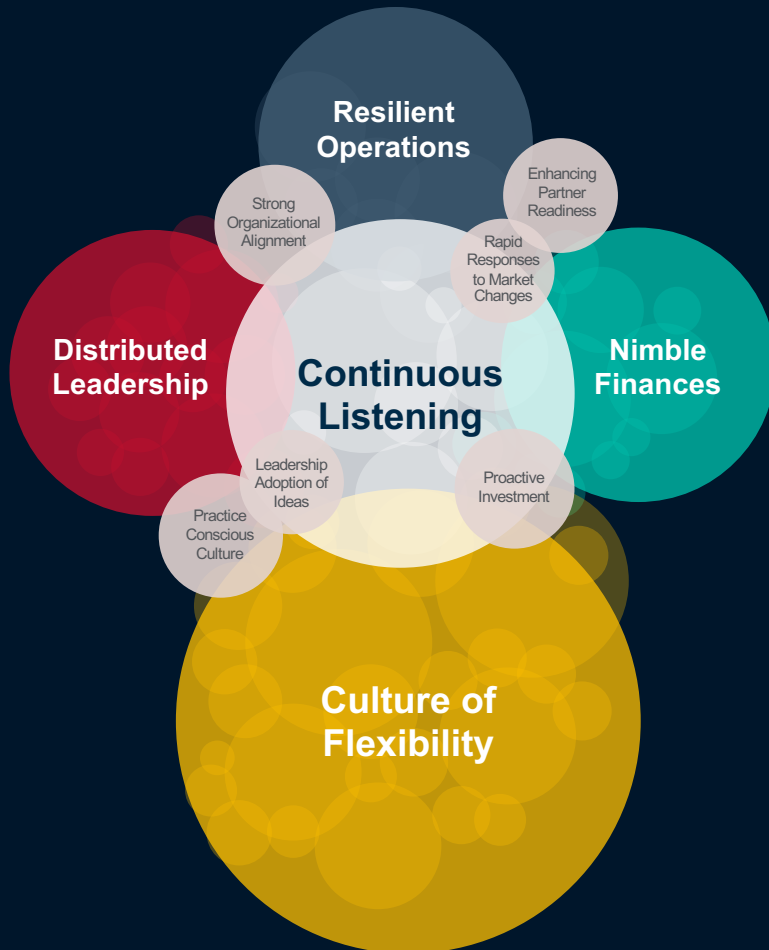




When the ground is shifting beneath your feet,
you need the ability to **move quickly and
respond to changing conditions.**

How Business Agility Helps You Thrive in the Age of Disruption, [RGP Insights](#)

The Business Agility Ecosystem



How to **Navigate Change** & Stand Out From Your Competitors

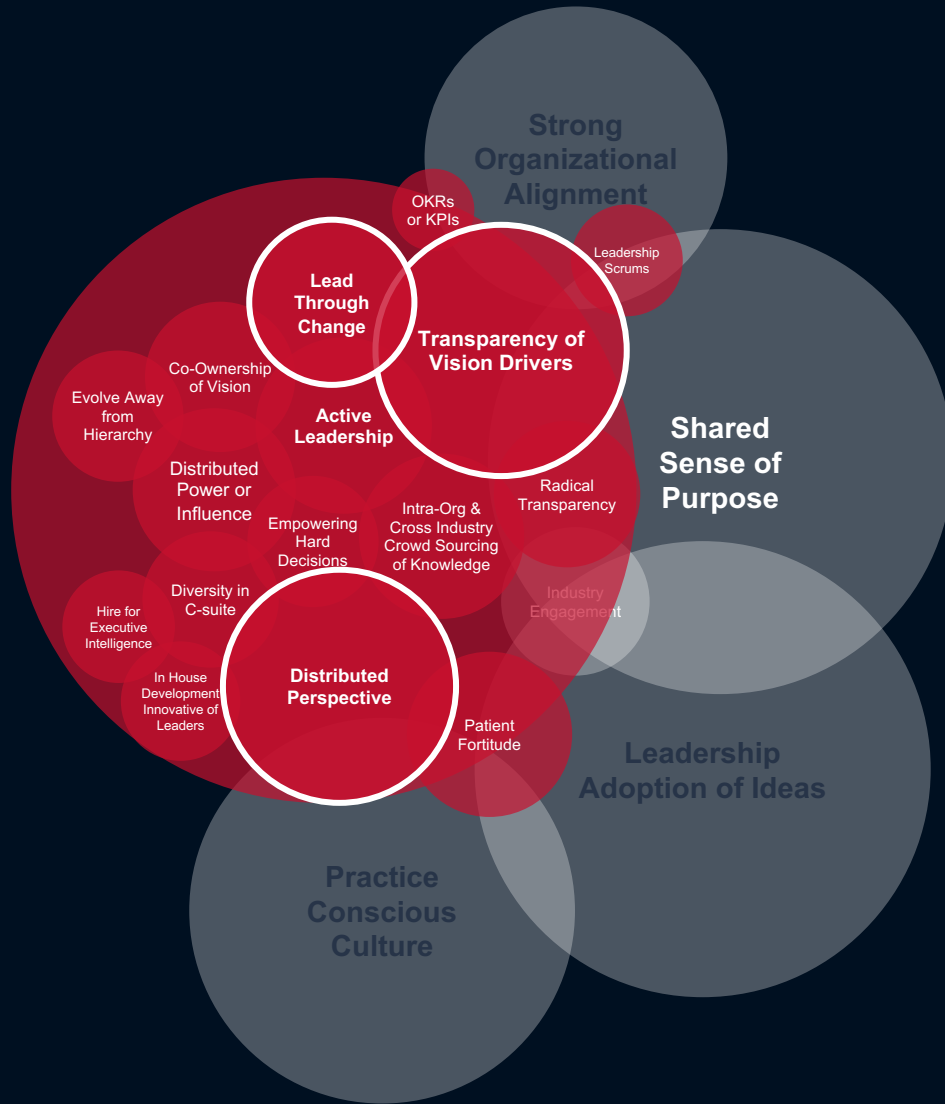
To take advantage of emerging opportunities and confront potential threats, you must evolve from the rigid approaches of the past by embracing agility to create customer value for the future. After all, when the ground is shifting beneath your feet, **you need the ability to move quickly and respond to changing conditions.**

Organizations that are successfully navigating disruption to capitalize on opportunities rather than viewing them as threats share five core characteristics.

- Distributed Leadership
- Culture of Flexibility
- Resilient Operations
- Nimble Finances
- Continuous Listening

Our research revealed that **Continuous Listening** is the core ingredient that binds it all together, supercharging your ability to nimbly respond to disruptions and realize more benefits during major change events.

We also identified a series of **connecting concepts that empower organizations to maintain agility at scale.** We'll explore those later in this report.




Distributed Leadership.

Shared Vision, Collaborative Innovation

Smart, quick decisions don't happen in a silo. That's because leaders can't intrinsically know everything that's going on. The eyes and ears that could perceive an opportunity have the potential to come from anywhere—from the office newbie to the C-suite.

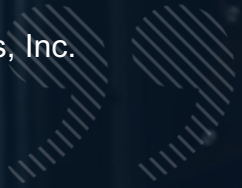
To harness the power of disruption, leadership must be distributed, inclusive and constantly listening.

Companies have a choice to retain leadership within the higher executive levels of the organization or to distribute it throughout. Embracing the leadership tendencies of employees throughout the organization creates an environment where challenges are seen as opportunities for growth. Companies that distribute leadership are more adaptive when faced with large and sudden change events, realizing more benefits and experiencing fewer obstacles.



Companies that **view all of their people as leaders**, regardless of what their title is or where they sit in the organizational hierarchy, **can react to change a lot faster and usually get better results** than those that don't.


Doug Groves, CFO, Iteris, Inc.



DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Radical Transparency of Vision Drivers.

It's simple: Have a strategy and communicate it. **Connecting your workforce to the "why"** of the organization not only supports keeping everyone personally engaged, it drives strong organizational alignment that enables Resilient Operations. By also combining strategy with radical transparency, leadership can engender a culture where employees can engage with thoughtful disagreement **and exchange ideas without creating lasting conflict.**



The company needs the North Star. **Everybody needs to be working toward a single common goal**, and there's flexibility that is required such that we continue to make progress and forge onward.

– Daniel Chao, CEO, System1 Biosciences

Leadership that embraces innovation experiences:

**7%**

More benefits than those that do not.

**16%**

Fewer obstacles than those that do not.



The most successful change comes from **mobilizing more leadership** from many more people.

– Dr. John P. Kotter, Change Leadership Expert

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Leading Through Change.

Actively engaged leaders partner with their workforce in times of adversity, leading through change rather than directing the team from a safe distance. This active support provides a strong foundation for organizations to sustain themselves through adverse change events, emerging better and smarter.

Active leaders don't shy away from delegating responsibilities, either. They empower their organizations by pushing decisions down the hierarchy to the most informed decision maker. This is most successful when active leaders also encourage co-ownership of their vision, reinforcing the ability of individuals to consume and live that vision and informing decisions that align with an overall vision.

This leadership approach provides a powerful advantage in times of adversity and is a key characteristic of agile organizations.

It's important that companies identify individuals with high levels of executive intelligence at all levels of their organization—people who can quickly and decisively assess threats and opportunities. These individuals can serve as conduits for actively distributing leadership while being cultivated for executive positions.

Leadership development programs should be designed to reinforce attributes of agile businesses, embedding theory and principles in real work—and fearlessly investigating the mindsets that underpin behavior.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Diversified & Distributed Perspectives.

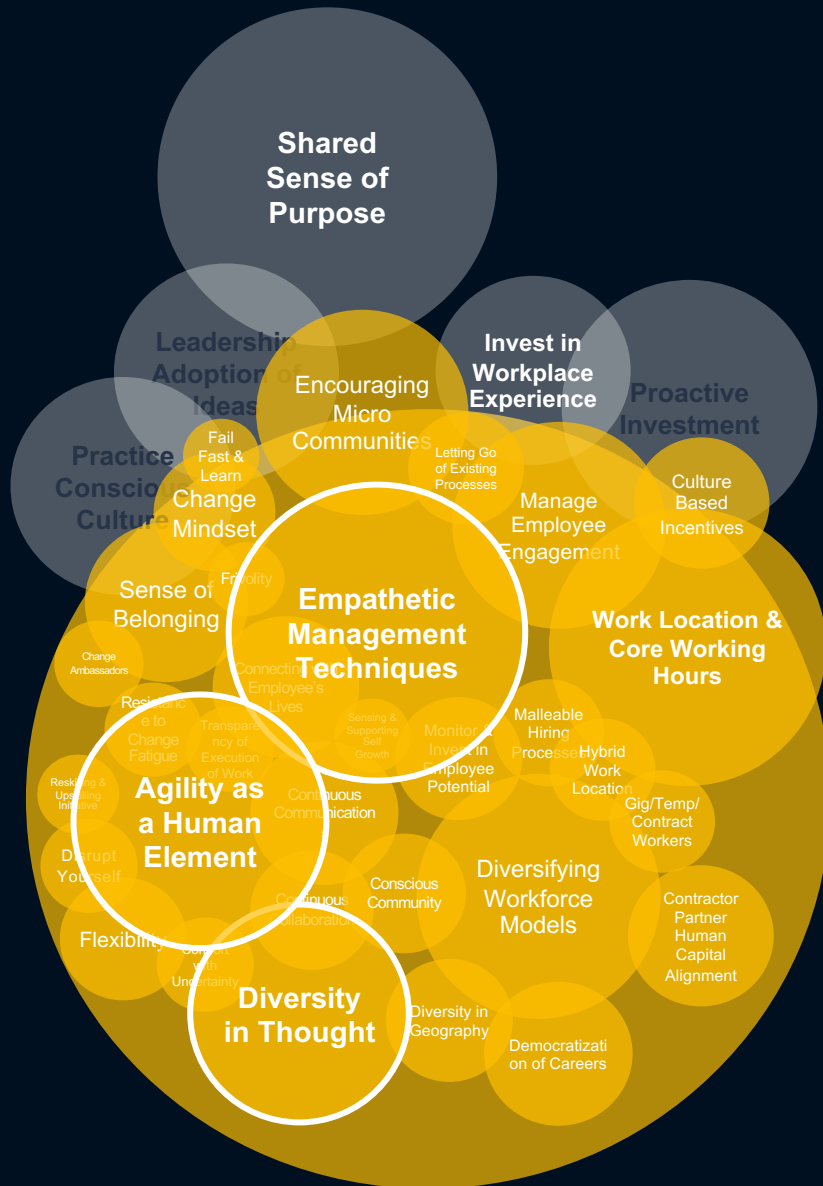
The command-and-control nature of hierarchical org charts is dying. **By distributing leadership and perspectives, organizations can create a culture where power is shared and influence encouraged.** By also tapping into the knowledge and experience of a broader section of society, they can build a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Ultimately, organizations that strive to embrace diversity in the C-suite by focusing on varied backgrounds and experiences are better equipped to face adverse change events than companies that do not.

While the organizational hierarchy itself is not going away anytime soon, the role it plays is changing. **Stability in the hierarchy becomes more important as companies experience external change events.** Constant shifting of people in leadership positions generates unnecessary churn in processes, procedures and policies—which, in turn, creates friction and becomes a barrier to realizing benefits of change. **Process changes should evolve from feedback and ideas gained through Continuous Listening—rather than be spurred by changes in executive positions.**



Companies with a deep-rooted culture of innovation, fueled by an agile workforce managed with empathy, are 15% more likely to experience benefits from macro events. When embedded within organizational culture, **flexibility plays a significant role in how successful companies are in navigating macro events.**

– Lorraine Bardeen, VP & CTO, Microsoft

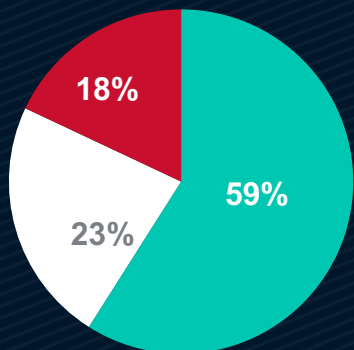




59%

of research participants agreed with the statement:

**My company supports
alternatives to the traditional
9-to-5
workday.**



■ Agreement

■ Neutral

■ Disagreement

CULTURE OF FLEXIBILITY

Empathetic Management & Core Working Hours.



We encourage our team to just take time to talk to each employee as a person and find out what's going on in their life and make sure they're OK.

– Jen Leuer, CEO, Cyberscout

Empathy enables managers to respect the unique needs and goals of each team member, matching work assignments to support both performance and satisfaction. That's why empathetic management is often more productive and correlates to better performance and higher employee engagement.

Leaders should encourage managers to connect with each other and their direct reports on a personal level. This becomes even more critical during crisis events when work burnout becomes prevalent, and people find it difficult to separate work and home life.

Flexible work location and core working hours show respect for everyone's need for work-life balance, making them valuable tools for reinforcing culture. However, moving forward, work from home (WFH) initiatives will look different. In knowledge and service industries, employees, especially contract workers, will expect WFH options. And companies will need to adjust recruiting processes to accommodate them.

We're already seeing the impact, as the demand for highly skilled talent outstrips supply—and talent is in a position to demand greater flexibility.

CULTURE OF FLEXIBILITY

Diversifying Thought & Workforce Models.

Companies that **support alternatives to the traditional 9-to-5** workday **experience 7% more benefits** than companies that don't.

Agile workforce models include widespread support of remote work and/or flexible hours, building geographically diverse teams as well as employing freelance, part-time, limited-term, gig work, crowd work or work share staff. **This accelerating trend supports the democratization of careers and investment in employee potential, allowing organizations to grow their teams internally.** When new team members are recruited, hiring practices should be malleable to build and reinforce practices of diversification.

Companies that also bring together people who think differently from one another create conversations that stimulate new ideas. These new ideas and diverse perspectives must then be actively distributed in order to be beneficial.

The Value of Diversity



18%

Companies that are actively increasing diversity **experience 18% more benefits** than companies that do not.



9%

Companies that improve as a result of workforce demographic diversity **experience 9% more benefits.**



A word of caution: diversity of thought should be achieved as a result of diverse representation of people from all walks of life. And it should be implemented with other diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) objectives that strengthen organizational agility, including fostering a culture of belonging and representing the customer base.

CULTURE OF FLEXIBILITY

Agility as a Human Element.



It is not the strongest that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones **most responsive to change**.

This quote, often ascribed to Charles Darwin, summarizes the critical importance of agility to individual and cultural success. In a workplace setting, **individuals who possess agility as a human element are constantly disrupting themselves, adopting a personal mantra of continuous improvement.** They're comfortable with uncertainty and likely to embrace change rather than become fatigued by it.

Consequently, these individuals are extremely coachable and thirsty to learn from peers and mentors who are all willing to share how they work, through continuous communication and collaboration.



Resilient Operations.

Ready to Respond to Disruptive Change

Companies that are typically successful with change initiatives:

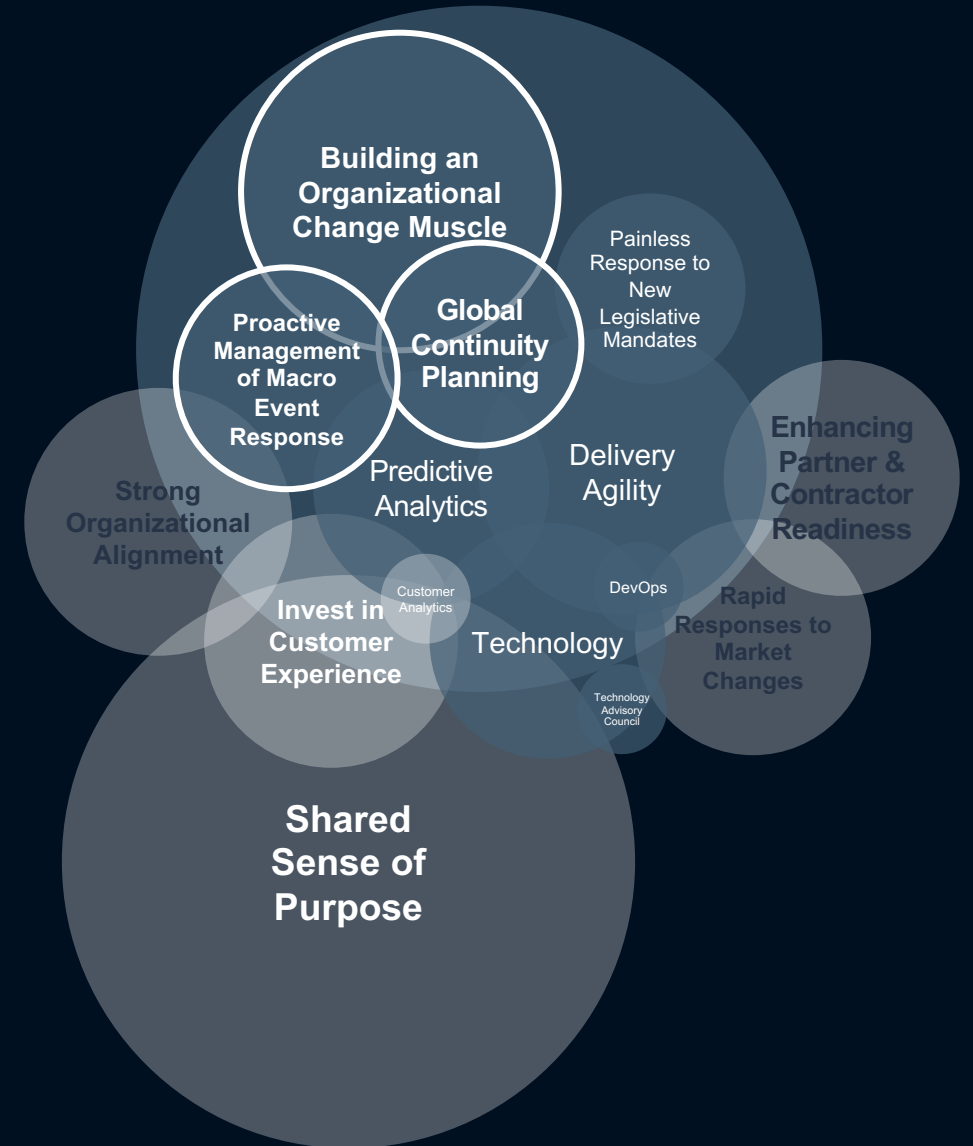


experience 10%
more benefits than those that do not.

Organizations built on a foundation of flexibility and distributed leadership are hotbeds of fresh ideas and new approaches. To support this atmosphere, agile organizations can foster resilience by being ready to bounce back when new ideas fail.

While it's essential to begin with the end in mind, transforming to become more agile also requires that you thoughtfully navigate the journey and proactively consider the human impacts of change. Simply forcing new processes onto existing systems without putting the necessary structures, technology, strategy and change management practices in place to support them will likely create resistance.


Instead, business agility must be woven into the very fabric of your organizational culture, creating opportunities to maximize the potential value of market-creating innovations.



RESILIENT OPERATIONS

Building the Organizational Change Muscle.

Every time an organization lives through a major change event, it develops communal knowledge and experience, forming a sort of muscle memory. A cycle of failed change reinforces fear of change and resistance. **A cycle of successful change reinforces innovation and a willingness to embrace change.** Think of it like this: When your body is healthy and you've developed strong muscles, you're more resilient.



Surviving and thriving in tomorrow's world will require the building of an organizational change muscle and driving change on a continuous improvement basis. **The stronger your change muscle, the stronger your organization will be now and, in the future regardless of what the future holds.¹**

– Craig Thielen, Chief Essentialist, Trisessential

1. Craig Thielen, "Top 4 Reasons Business Transformation Is Dead" <https://trisessential.com/>

RESILIENT OPERATIONS

Proactive Management of Macro Events.

There's a continuum of organizational responsiveness to macro change events: Some companies choose to respond rapidly, favoring speed over deliberation as they determine the right solution, while others take on more research and strategy development. Both approaches can be successful, based on the company's specific context and their specific team of people.

Regardless of approach, however, **leaders with strong executive intelligence are able to intuitively fill information gaps, avoiding the risk of “analysis paralysis” to make important decisions swiftly**. By collating available information and relying on diverse perspectives of their peers, they can work as a team to harness the power of opportunity that change events offer to advance their organization's goals.



Companies that proactively anticipate change events experience:



6%

More benefits than those that do not.


RESILIENT OPERATIONS

Global Continuity Planning for the Painless Response.

Business continuity is all about identifying key business impacts based on most likely scenarios. So, it's no wonder that most organizations have created a business continuity plan (BCP) for prevention and recovery from threats such as natural disasters, technology failures or even violent conflict. But what happens when a threat is global in nature? When multiple crises converge, not just in one region, but everywhere—all at once?

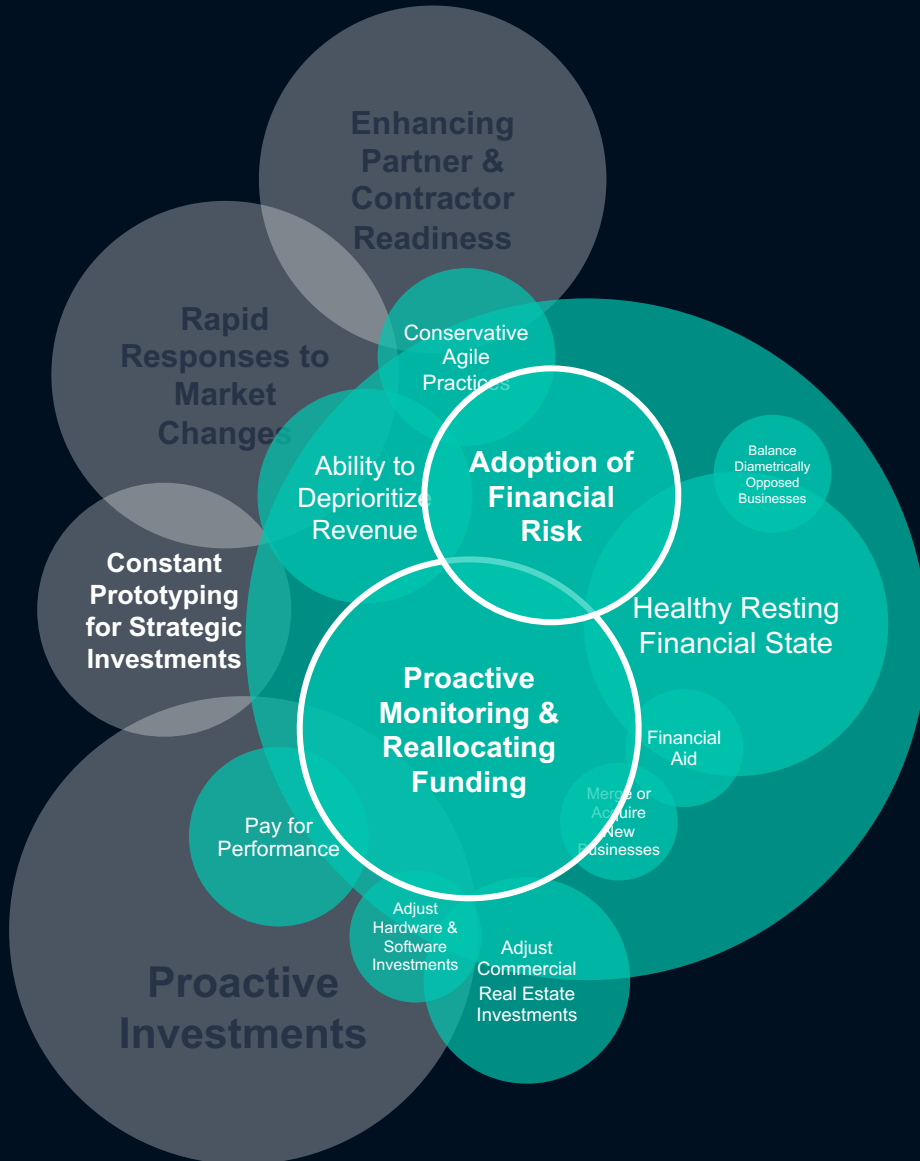
Moving forward, all companies must plan for global disasters in order to navigate the global change events of tomorrow. That means **we must continually prepare for events like these as best we can beforehand**—not after the fact. While it's impossible to create predefined response plans for unknown events, organizations can develop the behaviors and mindsets needed to quickly coordinate, effectively communicate, and rapidly decide on appropriate actions to stay a step ahead.

There may be no such thing as a truly pain-free response, but proactive planning will help build a resilient foundation for future disruptions.



You're always dealing with some set of changes, and in my opinion, **companies that do well are also extremely well-prepared.** It's when you're not fully prepared that you see a lot of cracks in the foundation through these big events.

— **Cynthia Abbott**, Co-Founder & Head of Operations, Query



Nimble Finances.

Dynamic, Responsive Financial Management

Funding an innovation-oriented organization requires a higher level of dexterity. Finances must be designed and carefully managed to be nimble, enabling leaders to make decisions with fewer financial constraints.

There's a gazillion examples that you could think of in terms of playing it safe, of playing it smart and then playing it on the bet, if you will. So, how do we choose to run the financial underbelly of the organization to stick around another day?

– Glen Kallas, Managing Partner, Camden Delta

Proactive Monitoring & Reallocating Funding.

Organizations that practice Continuous Listening are uniquely equipped with infrastructure and processes to support real-time monitoring of funding across the enterprise. This empowers financial teams to respond to market changes and business needs—proactively when possible—to **capitalize on strategic opportunities by deprioritizing revenue growth and redirecting funding as needed**. This, in turn, makes it possible to make necessary investments in the moment to support workforce needs, including compensation, technology and real estate.

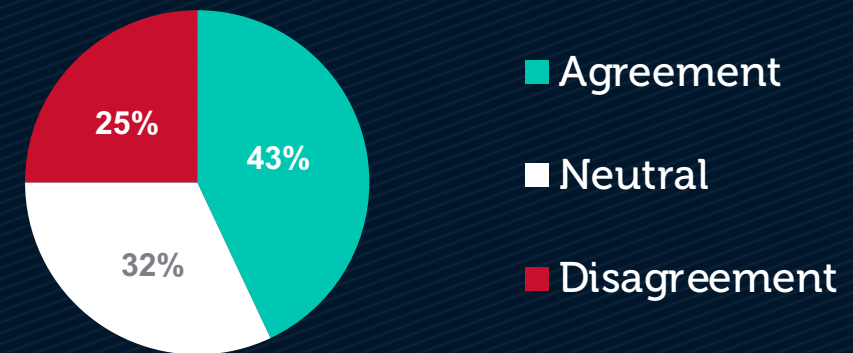
Agile organizations have a keen understanding of both human and financial constraints. So they can quickly assess what's required to respond to change events or support enterprise transformation initiatives. They can also **automate and optimize processes to free up resources and funding and embed the financial analysis capabilities needed** to accurately track operational as well as capital cost movements and returns.

Yet, many businesses miss out on this opportunity. **Nearly half of respondents in our survey indicated that their organizations fail to change until their bottom line is at risk.**

**43%**

of research participants agreed with the statement:

My company only implements change when there is something negatively impacting revenue, hindering our ability to deliver services or disrupting operations.



NIMBLE FINANCES

Capitalizing on Change.

When adverse change events occur, you need the financial resilience to place strategic bets and capitalize on emerging opportunities. **Organizations with a healthy resting financial state are better equipped to manage and mitigate risk, especially when it aligns with risk analysis based on real-time funding and spend.** Without this ability to take financial risks during macro events, you face another kind of risk: responding to perceived threats by retreating into survival mode.

On the other hand, change events might offer ideal opportunities for financially stable companies to make strategic acquisitions, as we've seen with the soaring volume of global M&A activity in 2021.

However, to fully realize the potential value of such acquisitions, it's critical to **not only account for the financial and regulatory impacts that M&A activities bring, but also invest in the post-integration workplace experience.**

Companies that rapidly respond to market conditions achieve:



12%

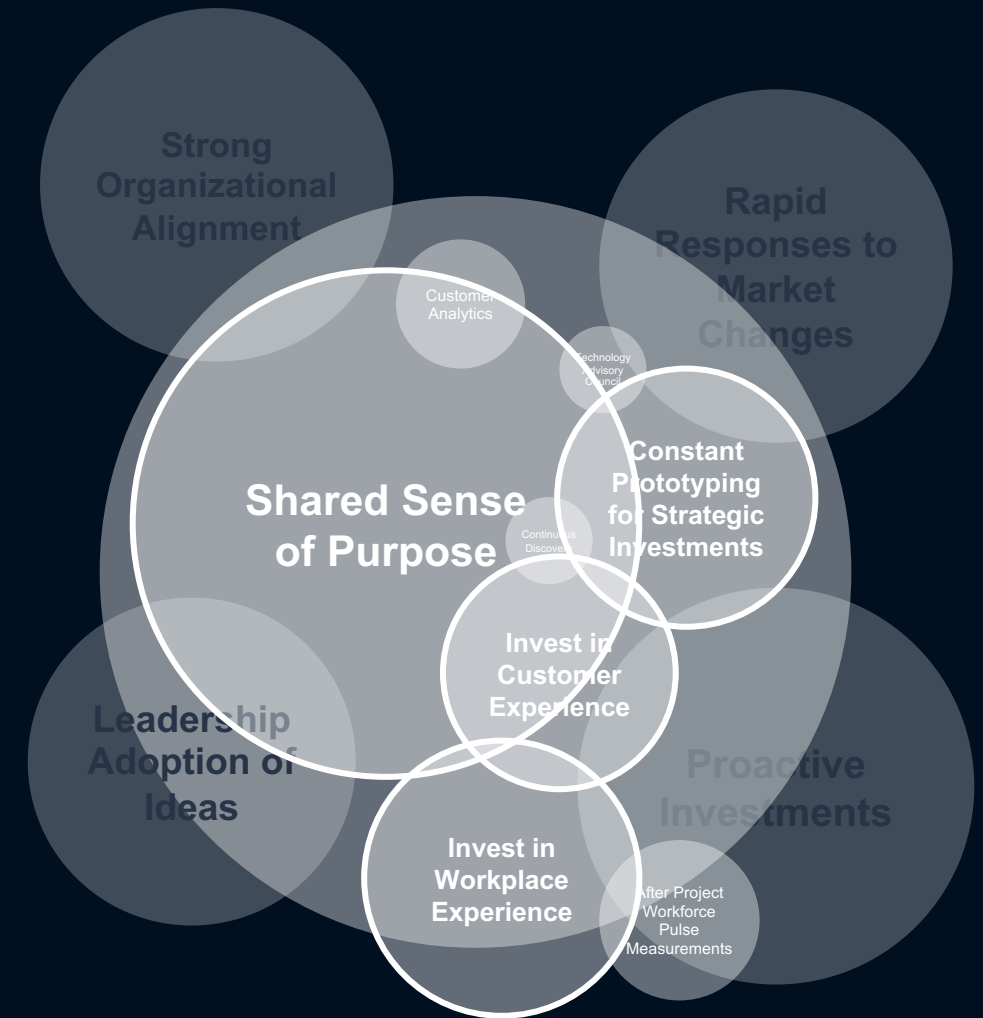
More benefits than those that do not.

Continuous Listening.

Tuning In to Key Business Channels

Organizations that continuously listen to their employees, customers, industry and the world amplify their ability to benefit from change.

Our research revealed that **Continuous Listening has become the glue connecting every aspect of an agile organization.** By bringing together multiple channels spanning customers, employees, competitors and the market, you're able to extract the value at the intersection of "inside-out" and "outside-in" perspective.



CONTINUOUS LISTENING

Tuning In to Key Business Channels.

These listening channel data streams enable all the other characteristics of business agility:



Distributed Leadership

Taps into diverse voices across the organization and creates a continuous feedback loop supporting leadership adoption of ideas.



Culture of Flexibility

Supports empathetic management and enhances a sense of belonging for your workforce.



Resilient Operations

Makes it possible to constantly prototype in response to market changes.



Nimble Finances

Supports real-time monitoring and reallocation of funding to make proactive investments.



^his data provides a treasure trove of insight, which can inform the insights you need to act with agility. But it's not easy to discern the meaningful signals in the sea of data flowing from all the listening channels. The challenge is that these channels are often siloed into echo chambers. **To take advantage and uncover actionable insights, you must bring all of these data sources together into a holistic view.**

CONTINUOUS LISTENING

Nurturing a **Shared Sense of Purpose.**

A shared sense of purpose across your organization **can build velocity and momentum to accomplish big things.** A weak shared sense of purpose can hold your organization back as it suffers from a disengaged and lackluster workforce.

By building a shared sense of purpose on a framework of Continuous Listening, the overall vision for your organization becomes aligned with your industry, customer base, leadership and workforce. And as listening channels feed the shared sense of purpose, it becomes a life force for the organization. It can shift and grow, helping organizations know when to make changes, when to make investments, and when to try new ideas.



The ultimate engagement is when an employee's life purpose connects to the company's mission.

– **Tom Darrow**, Founder,
Talent Connections Inc. & Career Spa Inc.

CONTINUOUS LISTENING

Make Strategic Investments by **Constantly Prototyping.**

When information from the listening channels aligns with the shared sense of purpose, **it reveals opportunities to try something new.** Those practicing agility at scale will prototype constantly, **creating a feedback loop within their continuous listening framework to identify which opportunities merit investment.**

There's no substitute for what you can learn from prototyping, especially when diverse teams collaborate, bringing together unique experiences and perspectives to relentlessly improve. In this way, prototyping enables you to make smart, proactive investments to rapidly respond to market changes, while constantly enhancing both the customer and the employee experience.



CONTINUOUS LISTENING

Invest in Workplace & Customer Experiences.

With the wild shifts in workplace culture that occur in conjunction with disruptive change, workplace experience becomes vital. When the country moved to remote work in early 2020, many employees found themselves struggling with fatigue and feelings of disconnection.

Strategic investments in workplace experience – based on continuous listening to the workforce – can reinforce a culture of flexibility, increasing innovation, improving employee engagement, reducing turnover, and ensuring that your organization successfully navigates macro events. Investing in workplace experience is exceptionally important for organizations choosing to grow and create value through mergers and acquisitions.

The same is true for customers, who no longer base their loyalty on price or product but on the experience they receive. If you can't keep up with their expectations, they'll leave. And the absence of customer feedback is not a sign of satisfaction: **only 1 in 26 unsatisfied customers complain—the rest churn**¹.

¹ The Experience Equation: How Happy Employees and Customers Accelerate Growth, Forbes Insights, 2020



Companies that proactively invest in workplace experience:



12%

More benefits than those that do not.

How Can Your Business Remain Agile as You Grow?

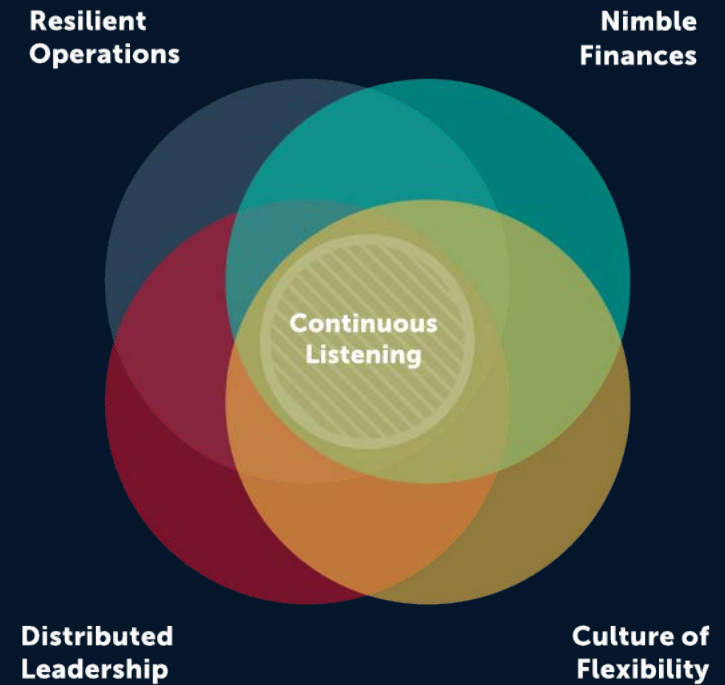
As organizations increase in size and maturity, it becomes more challenging to maintain agility. In those that succeed, our research reveals several additional characteristics that emerge, connecting and reinforcing the core characteristics to maintain agility. These attributes play an expanding role as the organization grows.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Start-Up

When a company is in the initial stages of operations, it's united by a common vision. The small group of people involved have a direct connection to the market their service or product serves, so Continuous Listening gets funneled through those with a personal stake in the company. In this way, the organization can remain extremely agile with less effort than larger, more mature companies.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Small & Medium Sized Businesses

As a company matures, functions delineate and staff with specialized skills come on board. More focus is needed to maintain strong organizational alignment between leadership and operations. The responsibility of continuous listening is shared across all major functional areas in order to make strategic proactive investments. The company may have new financial obligations to the market, creating constraints for investing on the fly. More planning is required to invest wisely.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Small & Medium Sized Businesses

Strong Organizational Alignment

Organizations need to align around vision, mission and goals, intentionally designing mechanisms to maintain that alignment between leadership and operations. What works for each organization depends on context and requires a bias toward action coupled with an ability to learn and shift.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Small & Medium Sized Businesses

Proactive Investment

Smaller organizations can make financial investments in people, processes and technology as their needs dictate. As organizations grow, this becomes more difficult. To mitigate, they need to maintain constant situational awareness and leverage emerging predictive analytics to anticipate needs and address them with speed and accuracy.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Small & Medium Sized Enterprises

When a company grows into an enterprise, the Continuous Listening function is no longer co-owned by the main functions. It requires its own operational framework as its constructs emerge and grow in importance. Continuous Listening begins to become the glue that makes operating with agility at scale possible. Because leaders are no longer playing a central role in Continuous Listening, they must narrow their attention to take in the most impactful ideas. Leadership also begins to find it increasingly difficult to maintain the foundational culture, making the concept of practicing conscious culture increasingly critical. Finally, the size and complexity of operations, coupled with financial pressures, make it progressively more difficult to rapidly respond to market changes.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Small & Medium Sized Enterprises

Practicing Conscious Culture

When companies form, the culture draws the people together, creating bonds and reinforcing working norms. Those unspoken norms begin to fade as the number of people increases and the workforce diversifies. To maintain a culture of flexibility, leadership must work harder to intentionally reinforce cultural behaviors, beliefs and principles.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Small & Medium Sized Enterprises

Leadership Adoption of Ideas

Leaders of mid-size and larger organizations often exist within an echo chamber where, in the absence of diverse perspectives, their ideas are reinforced by other leaders. Having information readily available via multiple channels can break this pattern, bringing the leaders closer to their workforce and enhancing their decisions.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Small & Medium Sized Enterprises

Rapid Response to Market Changes

Small companies are well known for their ability to "turn on a dime," delivering radically different offerings to the market seemingly on demand. Larger organizations must thoughtfully design operations to act on information gathered from the market, making the right investments to produce the right products.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Large Enterprises

In the largest of enterprises, the core functions of the business are the most delineated and are often at risk of becoming silos, operating independently of each other. Each must rely on the connecting concepts to continue to maintain business agility. With a foundation of continuous listening, each of the core functions can maintain awareness of and respect for each other and the market, resting in the shared sense of purpose.



SUSTAINING HUMAN AGILITY AT SCALE

Large Enterprises

Enhancing Partner Readiness

Companies of this size almost always leverage partnerships with other companies and contract organizations to supplement their operations and finances. Enhancing the collaboration with these partners to ensure integrated readiness becomes essential for organizations of this size to navigating adverse change events and maintain business agility at scale.

When adverse change events occur, your organization's strength is intimately connected to your partners' readiness. Particularly with larger organizations, authentic partnerships based on a foundation of radical transparency enables all parties to be aware of weaknesses and prepare as a team to respond to change by jointly executing business continuity planning exercises.



CONCLUSION

Cultivating Human Agility for the Now of Work.

In this world where disruption seems to impose the rules of nature on man-made markets, it's the radically empathetic organizations that will have the tools to evolve.

To respond to disruption, organizations first have to listen. And they have to listen with the purpose of understanding and a willingness to actually change. Transformations often fail because leaders narrowly focus on the “what” and “how,” forgetting the “who” and “why.” But radical empathy bridges all four, allowing you to harness the forces of disruption, instead of fighting against them.

To keep up with this accelerated pace of change—and not just survive but thrive—your organization will need to **infuse human agility into the corporate and cultural DNA.**

CONCLUSION

Cultivating Human Agility for the Now of Work.

Although the need to adapt to a changing environment has always been key to both human and business survival, the velocity of change we face today is unprecedented. The Fourth Industrial Revolution brought seismic shifts to the technology landscape, with artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, hyper automation, and other advances breaking barriers in almost every industry. The speed of these breakthroughs has no historical precedent—and, compared with previous industrial revolutions, we're now evolving at an exponential rather than linear pace.

As author and change management expert Dr. John P. Kotter wrote in his 2021 book, *Change*, **“What is new is how often we need to change, the pace at which we need to move, and the complexity and volatility of the context in which we are operating.”**

To keep up with this accelerated pace of change—and not just survive but thrive—your organization will need to infuse human agility into the corporate and cultural DNA. And there's no time to lose. The Fifth Industrial Revolution is already upon us. And while the Fourth Industrial Revolution focused on high-tech, this dawning age is all about high-touch—bringing humanity to the forefront by connecting innovation to purpose, inclusivity, collaboration and radical flexibility.

Are you ready?



PARTNERING TO RESPOND TO CHANGE

This research provides a model that organizations can follow to **thrive in turbulent times, overcoming obstacles and harnessing the forces of disruption to innovate and grow**. Wherever you are on the journey to building a more agile, human-first organization that's prepared to harness the forces of disruption, rather than fight against them, we're here to help.

In a world where technology is changing the way we do business at an accelerated pace, RGP's value lies in agility—helping you **get the right talent to tackle change and transformational initiatives with speed and efficiency**. We've conducted thousands of successful enterprise transformations, helping organizations across a wide range of industries to cut costs, streamline operations and build operational excellence to achieve sustainable, long-term growth.

Together with Veracity, an RGP company, we can help you build a more agile organization that's prepared to harness the forces of disruption, rather than fight against them.

- Workplace Experience
- Customer Experience
- Digital Transformation
- Business Technology
- Data & Analytics
- Business Automation & RPA
- Business Agility
- Change Management
- HR Strategy
- Finance Transformation
- Transaction Advisory
- Operational Risk Management



Want to learn more about how **RGP** and **Veracity** can partner with you to prepare for and respond to change? Drop us a line.

hello@rgp.com

Are You Ready for the **Now of Work?**

The question isn't whether disruption will happen but when—and how your organization can respond. We bring an agile, human-first approach to the challenges you face, working with you to deliver practical solutions and more impactful results.

Let's Talk: hello@rgp.com

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About RGP

RGP is a global human capital firm helping clients match the right professional talent needed to tackle change and transformational initiatives. Disrupting the professional services industry since 1996, we are the Now of Work—attracting the best talent in an increasingly fluid gig-oriented environment.

Based in Irvine, CA, with offices worldwide, our agile human capital model attracts top-caliber professionals with in-demand skill sets who seek a workplace environment that embraces flexibility, collaboration and human connection. Our winning value proposition has made us the leading provider of agile professional services to help clients transform their businesses and workplaces. With more than 5,000 professionals, we annually engage over 2,400 clients globally, including over 85% of the Fortune 100. (NASDAQ: RGP)

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Who We Work With



5,000

Professionals Engaged Annually



2,400

Clients Engaged Globally



85%

Fortune 100 Client Companies



Acknowledgements



Our Sincere Thanks & Gratitude

This work would not have been possible without the participation of the following individuals, who generously shared their time, experience and insight through our survey, panel discussions, interviews and workshop.

**Interested in participating
in future research?**

Please let us know at hello@rgp.com



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Aly Sparks, Global Head of Talent, The Adecco Group

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Cathy Halliwell, Vice President Portfolio Management, Teladoc Health

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Cynthia Abbott, Co-Founder & Head of Operations, Query

Daniel Chao, Chief Executive Officer, System1 Biosciences

David Solomon, Exec. Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, Young's Holdings

Doug Groves, Sr. Vice President, Chief Financial Officer & Secretary, Iteris

Eric Lesser, Executive Director, HR Strategy & Analytics, KPMG

Glen Kallas, Managing Partner, Camden Delta Consulting

Greg Meyer, IT Manager & Solutions Architect, Performance Foodservice

Jennifer Leuer, Chief Executive Officer, Cyberscout

John Curd, Sr. Manager, Software Engineering, Capital One

John Stedman, Director of Consulting & Professional Services, The Meadows Technology

Kohli Sarvshreshth, Vice President, Business Transformation, Equifax

Lorraine Bardeen, Vice President & Chief Technology Officer, Microsoft

Maggie Walker, SVP & Partner, Global HR Enablement, IHS Markit

Nevada Wagner, IT Manager, United Network for Organ Sharing

Sandra Pham, President & CEO - University and Business Operations, West Coast University

Tiffany Keaton, Global Marketing Director, CFA Institute

Tom Darrow, Founder & Principal, Talent Connections Inc. & Career Spa Inc.

Tony Orokos, Head of Finance Operations, Money Lion

Wayne Young, Chief Human Resources Officer, Genesis Financial Solutions

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Created by Humans, for Humans.

To explore how organizations can shift their perspective to view disruption as a profound opportunity, we asked two key questions:

1

What fear or obstacles do businesses need to overcome in order to realize the benefits associated with adapting to change?

2

How do organizations redesign their workforce and workplace strategies during a time of constant change?



Research Participants: Covering the Leadership Landscape

While we engaged leaders representing a variety of roles, we focused predominantly on C-suite executives, making sure to represent all industries defined by the Fortune 1000.

Our findings reflect the following methods:



Desk Research

Our team conducted thematic analysis of more than 50 sources, identified through approximately 10 controlled search terms from core research question concepts. Sources included freely available industry reports, blog posts and other online articles from reputable sources and resources of interest. Once the survey was underway, additional desk research was conducted to fill knowledge gaps and prepare for additional research activities.



Panel Discussions

Using a group discussion format, these group discussions served to gather qualitative data against our research questions. Our team conducted two panel discussions, each with 6-8 upper management or C-suite leaders representing a variety of industries and company sizes. The group discussion was facilitated using controlled questions and timeboxed "expert panel" style responses.



1:1 Interviews

Desk research and preliminary survey results supported the development of a targeted interview instrument to collect stories from industry leaders. This rich qualitative data supported clarification of emerging theories. Our team interviewed 18 senior leaders, most from the C-suite, representing a variety of industries and company sizes. Each 60-minute session was facilitated using a standardized semi-structured interview instrument. Qualitative thematic analysis was performed using both inductive and deductive methods.



Workshop

As a final step, insights gleaned from all other methods were used to feed group discussions to fine-tune and deepen understanding of the data. Our team facilitated a remote workshop to validate the model of concepts and innovative behaviors as developed from the data and represented in this infographic. Eight industry leaders were hand selected and invited to participate in this session based on their expertise in the key characteristics comprising the model and to maximize the value of group discussion.



Survey

Using the desk research, we designed a survey to collect quantitative data as well as broader qualitative data. This data was used to triangulate findings from other methods for more confidence in the insights. The survey was administered anonymously, with responses from 204 people, representing 117 unique companies, covering all job roles from C-suite to entry-level across all industries as defined by the Fortune 1000.

Research Team



Ashley Cook

Lead Researcher

acook@rgp.com



Arshan Yazdan

Research Analyst

ayazdanshenas@rgp.com



Tested Hypotheses

- ✓ Companies that experience a larger number of types of forces of change will experience higher impact of change. (n=160)
- ✓ Technology companies experience 6% more benefits ($p=.10$) to change (n=22, M=3.7, SD=2.4) than non-technology companies (n=163, M=3.0, SD=2.2).
- ✓ Companies that experience frequent or constant changes to processes, policies and procedures (n=20, M=4.6, SD=2.6) experience 6% more benefits during major change events than companies that do not (n=28, M=3.9, SD=1.9).
- ✓ Companies that lead the surge in innovation, changing faster than their peers or competitors, (n=116, M=4.3, SD=2.4) experience 11% more benefits ($p<.01$) during major change events than companies that do not (n=45, M=3.0, SD=2.1). **BUT** Companies that lead the surge in innovation, changing faster than their peers or competitors, (n=116, M=3.3, SD=2.3) experience 3% more obstacles($p=.07$) during major change events than companies that do not (n=45, M=2.7, SD=1.6).
- ✓ Companies with leadership that embrace innovation (n=33, M=4.5, SD=2.0) experience 7% more benefits ($p=.10$) than companies that do not (n=15, M=3.6, SD=2.7).
- ✓ Companies with leadership that embrace innovation (n=33, M=4.8, SD=2.3) experience 16% fewer obstacles ($p<.01$) than companies that do not (n=15, M=2.8, SD=1.9).
- ✓ Companies that lead the surge in innovation, changing faster than their peers or competitors, (n=116, M=4.3, SD=2.4) experience 11% more benefits ($p<.01$) during major change events than companies that do not (n=45, M=3.0, SD=2.1).
- ✓ Companies that are typically successful with change initiatives (n=98, M=3.9, SD=2.3) experience 10% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not (n=59, M=2.7, SD=1.9).

Tested Hypotheses

- ✓ Companies that proactively anticipate change events ($n=63$, $M=4.2$, $SD=2.5$) experience 6% more benefits ($p=.10$) than companies that do not ($n=23$, $M=3.5$, $SD=2.0$).
- ✓ Companies that invest in learning and development ($n=37$, $M=4.6$, $SD=2.5$) experience 7% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not ($n=17$, $M=3.8$, $SD=2.6$).
- ✓ Companies that improve as a result of workforce demographic diversity ($n=20$, $M=5.0$, $SD=2.4$) experience 9% more benefits ($p=.09$) than companies that do not ($n=22$, $M=3.9$, $SD=2.5$).
- ✓ Companies that are actively increasing diversity ($n=28$, $M=5.1$, $SD=2.2$) experience 18% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not ($n=14$, $M=2.9$, $SD=1.4$).
- ✓ Companies that support alternatives to the traditional 9-5 workday ($n=35$, $M=4.2$, $SD=2.2$) experience 7% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not ($n=17$, $M=3.3$, $SD=2.7$).
- ✓ Companies that proactively invest in workplace experience ($n=83$, $M=4.1$, $SD=2.3$) experience 12% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not ($n=76$, $M=2.7$, $SD=1.9$).
- ✓ Companies that rapidly respond to market conditions ($n=28$, $M=4.8$, $SD=2.5$) experience 12% more benefits ($p=.02$) than companies that do not ($n=20$, $M=3.4$, $SD=1.6$).
- ✓ Companies that engage with external vendors/partners to navigate change events ($n=68$, $M=3.9$, $SD=2.0$) experience 4% more benefits ($p=.09$) than companies that do not ($n=75$, $M=3.4$, $SD=2.4$).

Tested Hypotheses

- ✓ Companies that engage with external vendors/partners to navigate change events (n=68, M=3.5, SD=1.9) experience 7% more obstacles ($p<.01$) than companies that do not (n=75, M=2.7, SD=1.7).
- ✓ Companies where leadership drives decision making during change events (n=96, M=4.0, SD=2.3) experience 9% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not (n=48, M=3.0, SD=1.9).
- ✓ Companies where leadership and employees are aligned on enterprise objectives, organizational goals and future-state vision (n=91, M=4.1, SD=2.2) experience 12% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not (n=63, M=2.7, SD=2.0).
- ✓ Companies where leadership and employees are aligned on enterprise objectives, organizational goals and future-state vision (n=91, M=2.8, SD=1.7) experience 2% less obstacles ($p=.20$) than companies that do not (n=63, M=3.1, SD=2.1).
- ✓ Companies that support alternatives to the traditional 9-5 workday (n=35, M=4.2, SD=2.2) experience 7% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not (n=17, M=3.3, SD=2.7).
- ✓ Companies that proactively invest in workplace experience (n=83, M=4.1, SD=2.3) experience 12% more benefits ($p<.01$) than companies that do not (n=76, M=2.7, SD=1.9).
- ✓ Companies that rapidly respond to market conditions (n=28, M=4.8, SD=2.5) experience 12% more benefits ($p=.02$) than companies that do not (n=20, M=3.4, SD=1.6).
- ✓ Companies that engage with external vendors/partners to navigate change events (n=68, M=3.9, SD=2.0) experience 4% more benefits ($p=.09$) than companies that do not (n=75, M=3.4, SD=2.4).