



ADAPTIVE MINDSET™

Organizational Agility

Personal agility and resiliency are the keys to success

By David Collins, TRACOM, Vice President

It's clear that the business landscape is

changing in a rapid and disruptive way. And change is likely to remain a constant, as businesses face new technologies, rising customer demands and emerging non-traditional competitors. In response, executives recognize the need for greater agility.

Agile people create an agile organization. We define organizational agility as the capacity to recognize, deal with

and exploit opportunities in a changing environment. Agile companies adapt to and create change more successfully

than competitors and are able to capitalize on the opportunities emerging around them. Compared to non-

agile organizations that wither in the face of market and

technological changes, agile organizations effectively zig-

zag and use environmental turbulence to strengthen

themselves and innovate their products, processes,

and services. Think Apple, Toyota, or Zara.



Agile firms grow revenue 37% faster

In the effort to achieve organizational agility, many companies focus on building new structures or practices – eliminating jobs, offshoring, removing levels of management, and so on. **What they overlook is the “people” element. They often fail to recognize that achieving agility for their company requires change that begins and ends with their people.**

“Long-term success in this era of fast-paced technological change and global economic shifts requires a new way of thinking and operating. In fact, the corporate playbook is being rewritten and replaced by one that takes business agility to a level we have never seen before.”

— Lynne Doughtie, Chairman CEO, KPMG

74% of global CEOs surveyed by KPMG in 2015 cited new entrants disrupting their business model as a top concern. And 86% said that customer demand is under pressure because of declining customer loyalty.

According to a poll conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit, nearly 90% of executives indicate that agility is essential to business success. It is a critical pathway to higher revenues, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency.ⁱ Not surprisingly, agility is also connected to higher profitability and competitiveness over time.ⁱⁱ Research suggests that agile firms grow revenue 37% faster and generate 30% higher profits compared to non-agile firms.ⁱⁱⁱ

TRACOM GROUP

THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY™



PERSONAL AGILITY + RESILIENCY ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY



It Starts with People

Personal resiliency and personal agility lead to organizational agility.

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back in times of adversity and deal effectively with the changes that come at us. More than

any process, people play a critical role in enabling organizations to become more agile. It encompasses skills which combat viewing stress as a negative. Personal agility is the ability to generate positive change by adopting a flexible mindset that promotes the generation and implementation of original and useful ideas. Rather than merely withstanding change, agile individuals capitalize on opportunities in their environment and proactively create change. Let's look at these two inter-related skills in more detail.

Effectively Dealing with a Turbulent World

People have deeply ingrained cognitive biases that hold us back from being as resilient as we could be. For instance, we suffer from a negativity bias, meaning we tend to see the glass as half empty. Negative information is processed more quickly and has a stronger, more long-lasting impact on us compared to positive or neutral information. By learning techniques to overcome these biases, people can alter their outlook and minimize negative responses. They then can persevere through challenges that are bound to come. They

adapt to stressors and change in a way that not only allows them to bounce back, but to grow from the experience. In other words, they bounce forward by finding opportunities in adversity. In our research, we've found that resilient people share several characteristics. They believe they control their own future, they see the world in a positive but realistic way, they maintain a sense of calm and focus in the face of stress, they have a strong social support network, and they face stress rather than withdraw from it. Consider some examples of how resiliency makes a difference at work:

- A company announces a spin-off that split their company in two, but won't take effect for six months. Employees are appropriately fearful of the uncertainty they face. Absenteeism increases and productivity slips. But leaders can apply resiliency skills to help their people see the opportunities that also come with the change and prepare for the new post-divestment world.
- Salespeople consistently face rejection and are often evaluated based on short-term deal success. But resilient salespeople learn from these challenges and adapt their behavior. They recognize how the selling cycle has changed with online information and become more consultative in their sales approach.



Jumpstarting Change

Effectively dealing with change is important. But creating positive change is even more so. Research shows that employees who create change are 43% more effective than employees who merely respond to change.^{iv} Importantly, employees' ideas do not have to be large. In fact, research suggests that the aggregation of small ideas at the individual level can be more beneficial to an organization compared to large ideas, which are highly visible and more easily replicated by competitors.^v

What is important to recognize is that while people have the potential to cause positive change, they are often held back by their mindset. We have all developed automatic, entrenched ways of thinking and perceiving the world.^{vi} While these mental habits are helpful in some ways, such as in making routine choices, they impede innovative thinking. One longitudinal study conducted on kindergartners showed that 98% of them score at genius level in their ability to generate many solutions to problems. But, over the course of time, this capacity dwindled such that, by age 10, only 30% scored at genius level and by adulthood, only 2% score at genius level.^{vii} As we age, our experiences strengthen particular neural pathways, we develop recurrent thought patterns and beliefs, and lose mental flexibility. Consider some examples of how agility makes a difference in the workplace:

- A manager engages her entire team to challenge the status quo, finding new ways of operating and increasing customer satisfaction. She then energizes other teams to expand the initiative throughout the company.
 - A salesperson recognizes a change in the supply chain, creates an opportunity for his largest customer. These insights improve the customer's business while increasing his own sales.
 - The leader of a new project implementation team identifies previously unforeseen pitfalls facing the project and collaboratively develops solutions, reducing the risk for long-term success.

These kinds of changes — large and small — combine to foster organizational agility. An agile workforce means more ideas are generated and they are also better evaluated, vetted, championed, and implemented.



ADAPTIVE MINDSET™

Training Makes a Difference

The good news for organizational agility is that once people become aware of the biases they face, they can correct for them using specific strategies. Research indicates that resiliency and agility skills can be learned and acquired. TRACOM has developed specific assessments and courses to measure and improve the resiliency and personal agility of individuals, leading to a more agile organization.

Developing a Resilient Mindset™

TRACOM's one-day course to build resiliency and high performance in a fast-paced world teaches people about the sources of their stress, their response pattern to stress, and practical strategies for altering those responses. The program is based on decades of research on resiliency as well as new and groundbreaking research in neuroscience.

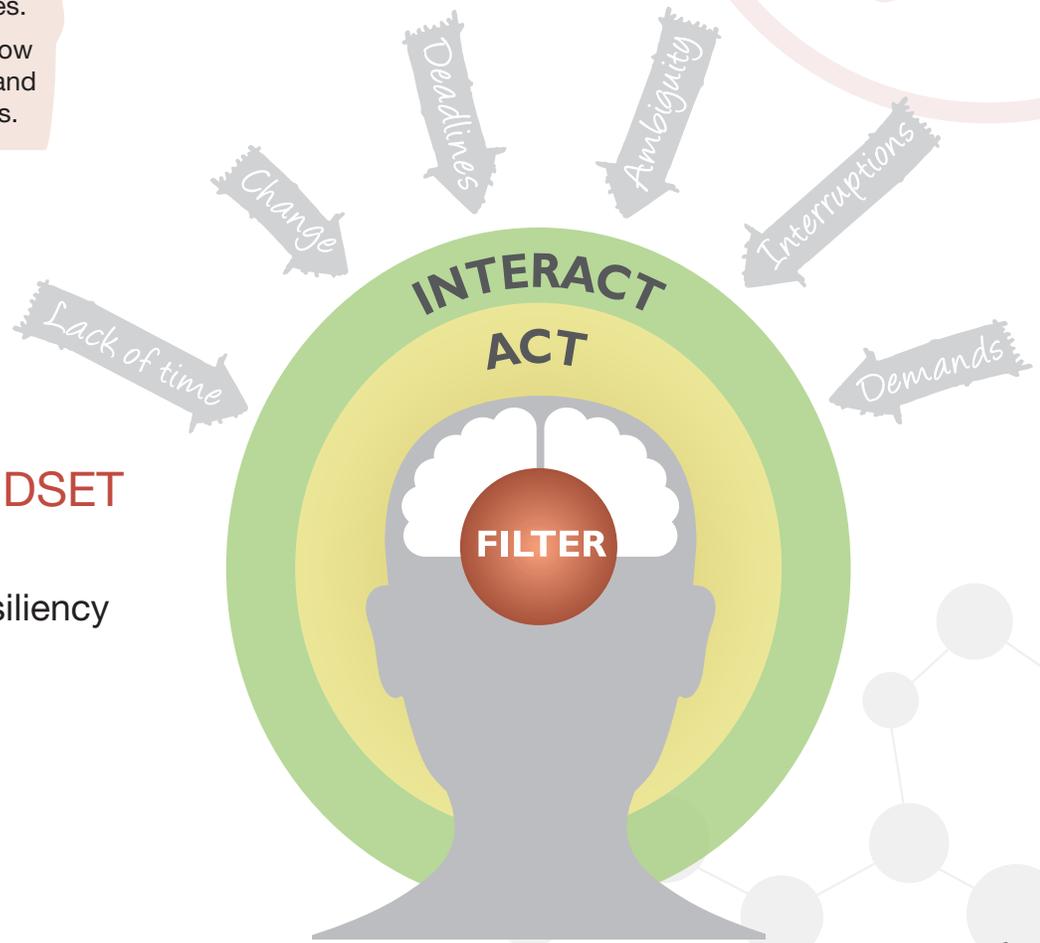
The Resilient Mindset Model consists of three dimensions.

- 1. FILTER** – How you filter information and interpret the world.
- 2. ACT** – How you handle challenges.
- 3. INTERACT** – How you communicate and connect with others.



RESILIENT MINDSET MODEL™

The elements of Resiliency

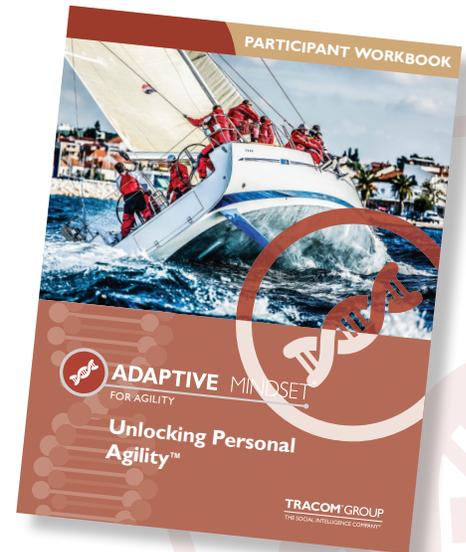




Unlocking Personal Agility™

Unlocking Personal Agility is a comprehensive one-day course for understanding personal agility and techniques to enhance agility at work. Participants learn what agility is, why it is important, as well as what holds them back from being agile. Then, they spend the majority of the course learning strategies to upset their normal thinking habits and enhance agility.

A critical underpinning of the course is the IDEA model. TRACOM's research suggests that the agility process is comprised of four steps, which are easily remembered with the acronym IDEA.

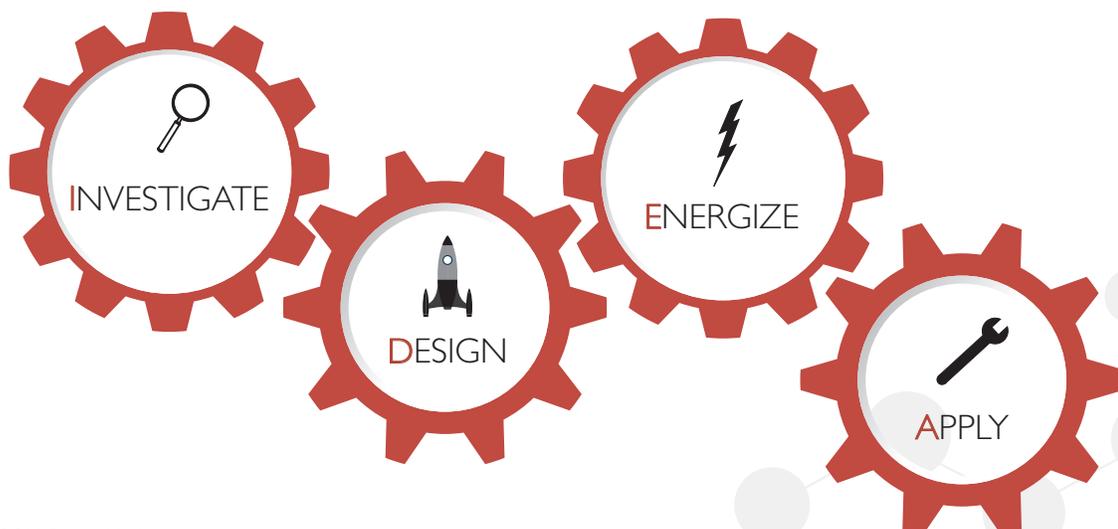


THE IDEA MODEL™

- Investigate** Looking for opportunities to improve current services, work processes, or products.
- Design** Generating concepts that lead to improvement.

Energize Influencing others, building coalitions, and mobilizing support for new ideas.

Apply Putting bold ideas into a practical plan, testing and modifying the plan, and making new ideas a regular part of the work process.





ADAPTIVE MINDSET™

Putting Resilience and Personal Agility to Work

These programs offer extensive opportunities for learners to practice, interact, and receive feedback. One of the key elements of the programs is that they are made relevant to learners' work. Throughout the day, learners choose strategies that most resonate with them, apply them to a work problem they can influence, develop a solution, and plan for implementation. They leave with an action plan specific to their own work and developmental needs. This action plan, along with learning aids, serves as the bridge to help them transfer their learning to the work context.

Participants receive and learn from the Adaptive Mindset for Agility Multi-rater Profile and the Adaptive Mindset for Resiliency Multi-rater Profile.

All of the strategies put forth in these both of these programs have been shown to be effective and are anchored in psychological research and theory.

In a business climate that is uncertain and constantly changing, organizational agility is a strategic imperative. And it is achieved through people. By developing their personal agility and resiliency, TRACOM builds agile organizations.



Agility means more ideas are generated AND they are better evaluated, championed and implemented!



Resiliency allows us to deal with stress and change in a productive way.



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About the Author

David Collins is Vice President of The TRACOM Group. He is a frequent speaker at leadership events. He's the author of numerous organizational performance articles and the *SOCIAL STYLE & Versatility Facilitator Handbook*. He was part of the team that developed TRACOM's Resiliency and Agility programs.

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