



Learning Agility

Research Summary

 **HFM TALENTINDEX**
Online Assessment

Learning Agility Research

Insights and conclusions thus far...

After a long period of research and development in collaboration with several partner organisations, our first Learning Agility Online Assessment was made available in October 2014: the development-focused HFMtalentindex Learning Agility Scan. Soon after, the Learning Agility Indicator - created for selection contexts - was also released.

The HFMtalentindex research team played a crucial role in the development of the Learning Agility reports, the validation of dimensions and the ongoing global research study. We have summarised the most relevant and interesting Learning Agility research findings below*...

2014: Learning Agility White Paper

Initial conclusions from the database:

In the first HFMtalentindex Learning Agility White Paper (Hofkes & Busato, 2014), the emphasis was mainly on explaining what Learning Agility is and why it is important. In addition to the definition, explanations and examples, some initial research results were also included:

- Women typically score higher on the People Agility dimension, while men typically score higher on Mental Agility.
- Women typically score higher on Self-awareness than men.
- In terms of age, the youngest employees (17-24 years) score lowest on Self-awareness, followed by the oldest employees (55-64 years).
- Employees between the ages of 25 and 34 score highest on Self-awareness.
- The group of employees aged between 25 and 34 scores highest on Results Agility, illustrating that they would like to be successful.
- Employees with a university degree score highest on Self-awareness.

2015: HR Learning Agility Research

How learning agile are HR professionals?

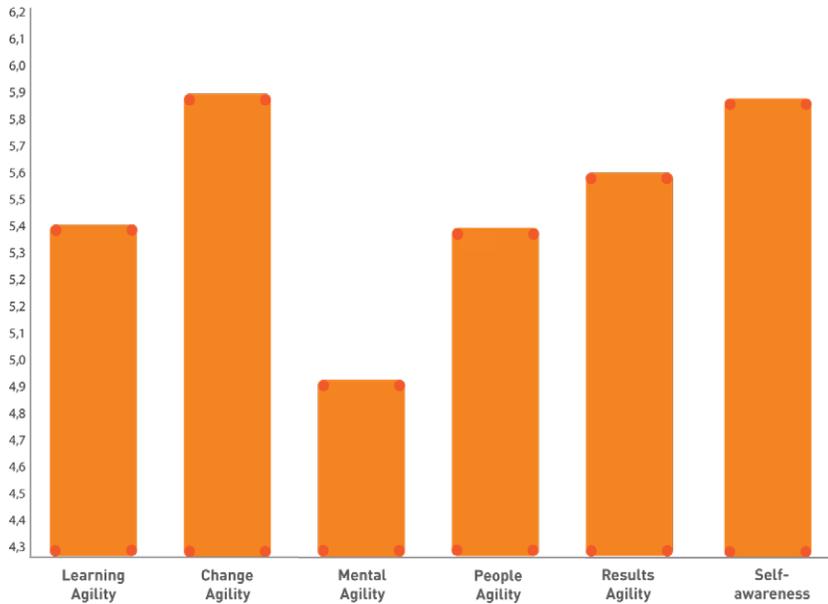
Learning Agility quickly became a popular topic within the HR industry, with clients requesting analyses of their in-house employees. In addition to these studies, we were curious about how HR professionals score as a group on Learning Agility.

The reason for choosing HR as a group of interest was due to the fact that they are likely to act as the architects of the organisation who should (partly) shape its change strategy. HR must be able to switch and adjust extremely quickly and should therefore be learning agile.

* In each graph, 5 represents an average score.

The results yielded the following picture of Learning Agility within the HR space:

Learning Agility & HR



Overall, HR professionals appeared to score above average on Learning Agility. They also did exceptionally well on the dimensions of Change (constant curiosity), Results (goal-oriented) and People (open to others). Compared to this, Mental Agility - the analysis of complex problems - was slightly lower. The fact that HR is strongly aware of its own strengths and weaknesses and sees opportunities to improve itself (Self-awareness) is the driving force behind the higher Learning Agility of the professional group.

There were a few clear differences between male and female HR professionals. Women in HR scored higher on Self-awareness and significantly higher on People Agility. Males in HR were more focused on Change and Results than women. They also had higher scores on Mental Agility.

Men and women

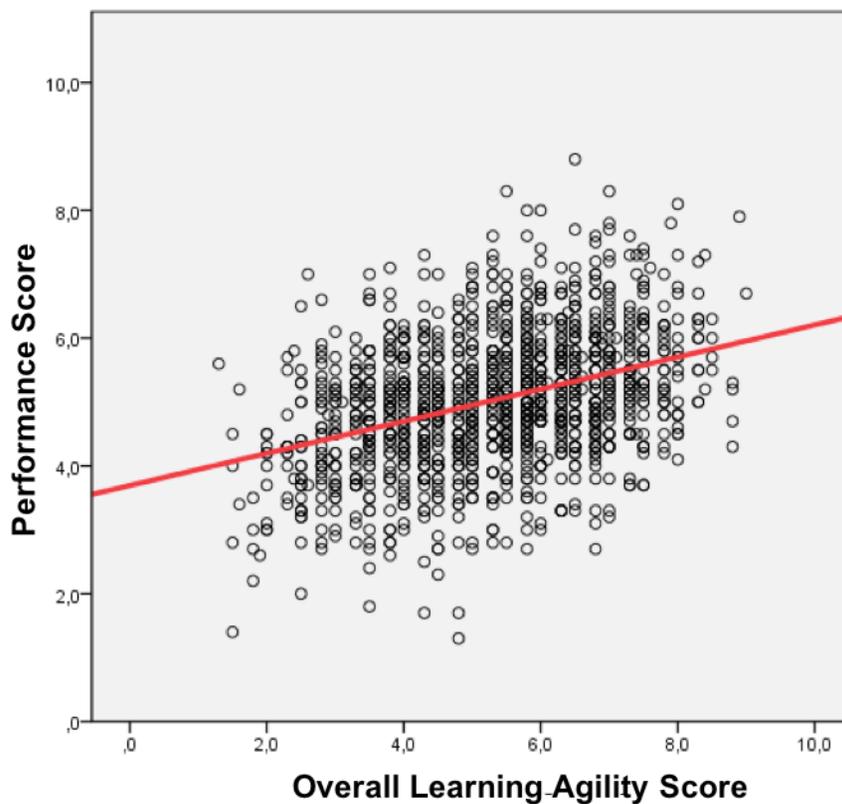


2016: The potential of Learning Agility

The relationship between Learning Agility and Success

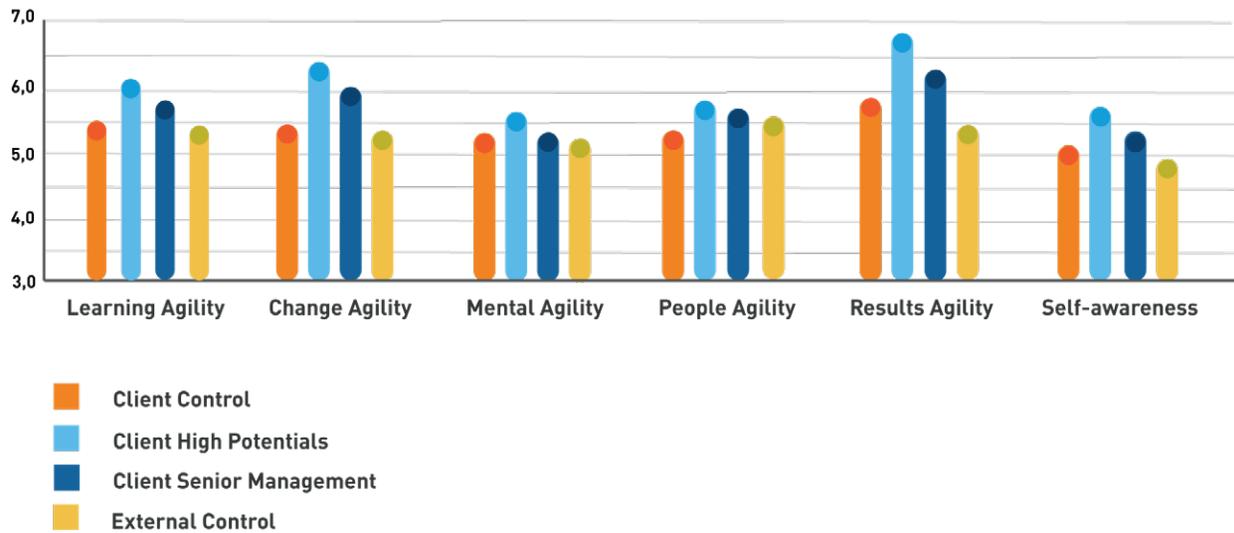
In the run-up to the first Learning Agility Seminar in 2016, an extensive research project was conducted among nearly 20,000 respondents. Some of the primary conclusions are outlined below:

Performance



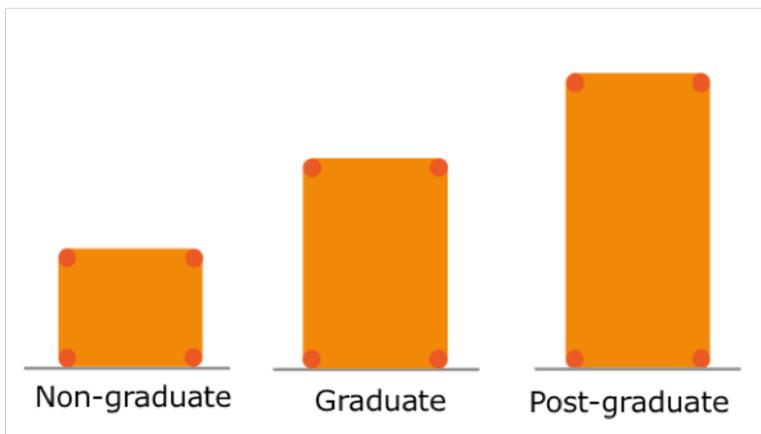
One of the main analyses aimed to investigate the relationship between Learning Agility and current performance. A strong correlation was found. In other words, a high Learning Agility score is likely to yield a higher performance score. In an analysis of the underlying dimensions of Learning Agility, it appeared that both Change and Results Agility showed the strongest correlations with Performance. All other dimensions also showed significant correlations, albeit less strongly.

High Potentials



The relationship between Learning Agility and High Potentials was investigated. The graph above shows that High Potentials indeed score higher on Learning Agility than the average population. In fact, there were often higher Learning Agility scores found amongst High Potentials than those found within the Senior Management group. A simple conclusion may be that, instead of labelling employees as High Potentials after a full battery of tests, you could instead only assess their Learning Agility. The relationship between Learning Agility and High Potentials has already been documented in several studies; this case study supports these outcomes.

Education

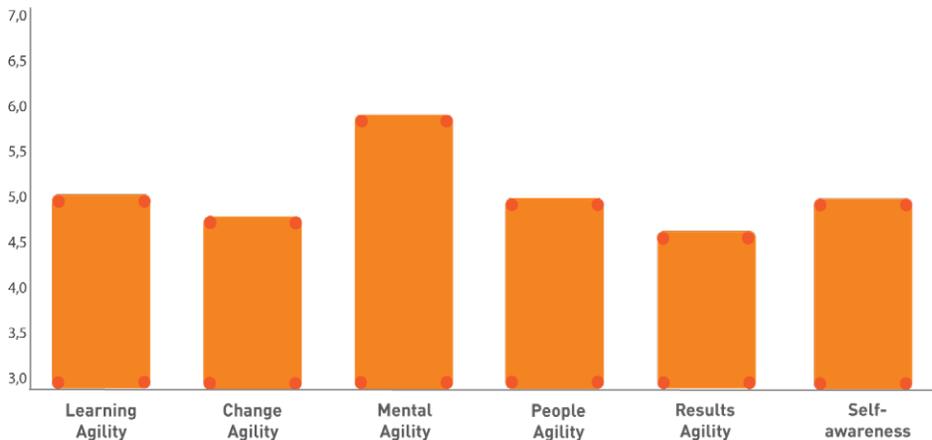


We also looked at the relationship between Learning Agility and education level. A strong correlation was found between the highest education level (post-graduate) and Learning Agility. These high correlations also applied on the Learning Agility dimension level, with the exception of People Agility.

2017: The Learning Agility of engineers

In the spring of 2017, we were asked whether we wanted to collaborate with the Royal Institute of Engineers to conduct a study on Learning Agility. Since we are often asked about technical roles such as engineers in relation to Learning Agility, this was an excellent opportunity for research. Below are some of the standout results:

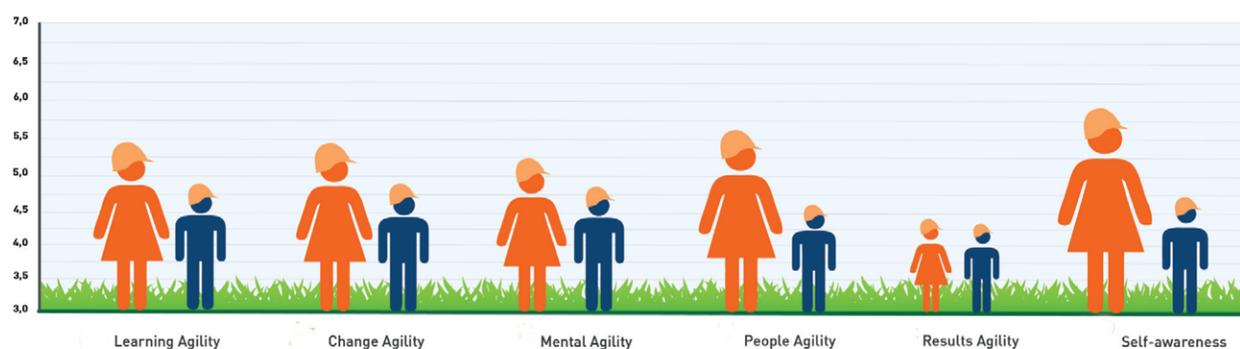
Overall scores on Learning Agility dimensions



Looking at an overall picture of Learning Agility dimensions, the results were in line with that we expected. Engineers scored highest on Mental Agility, with the lowest average score on Results Agility. This may mean that engineers are more interested in the mental puzzle of problems, than in the final achievement of a goal. Their primary focus is on in-depth, longer-term thinking; a focus on results does not necessarily drive their Learning Agility.

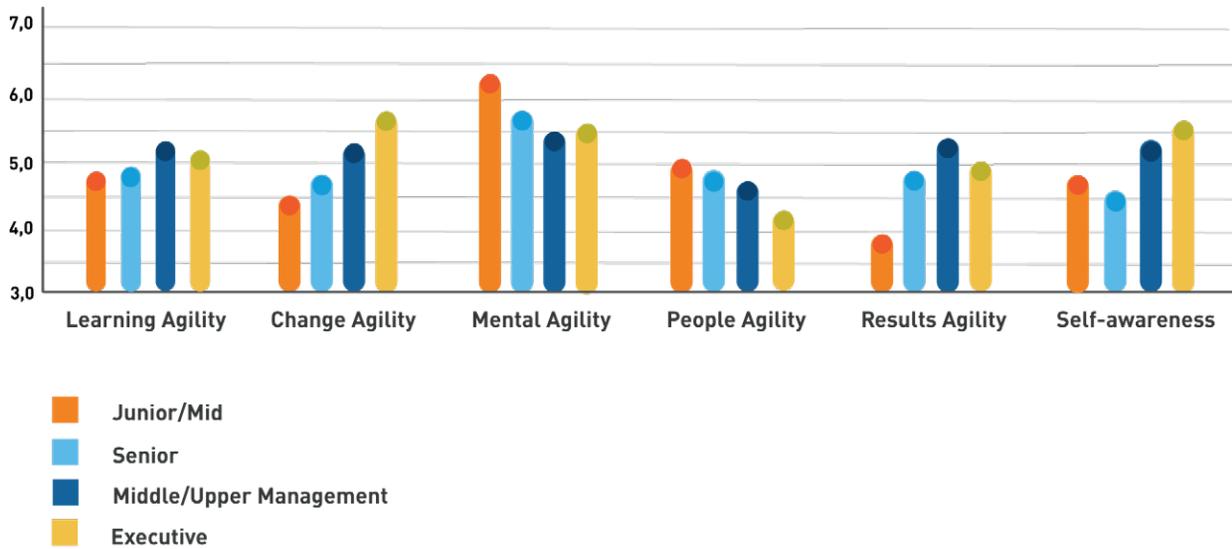
Do women make better engineers?

Men and women



Looking at the graph above, it is easy to jump to conclusions. Although they are still in the minority in the total population, female engineers score higher on all Learning Agility dimensions than their male counterparts. It is interesting to note that female engineers mainly stand out on the dimensions of People Agility and Self-awareness. These two elements have previously been linked within the research as having a large impact on performance growth.

Learning Agility & job level

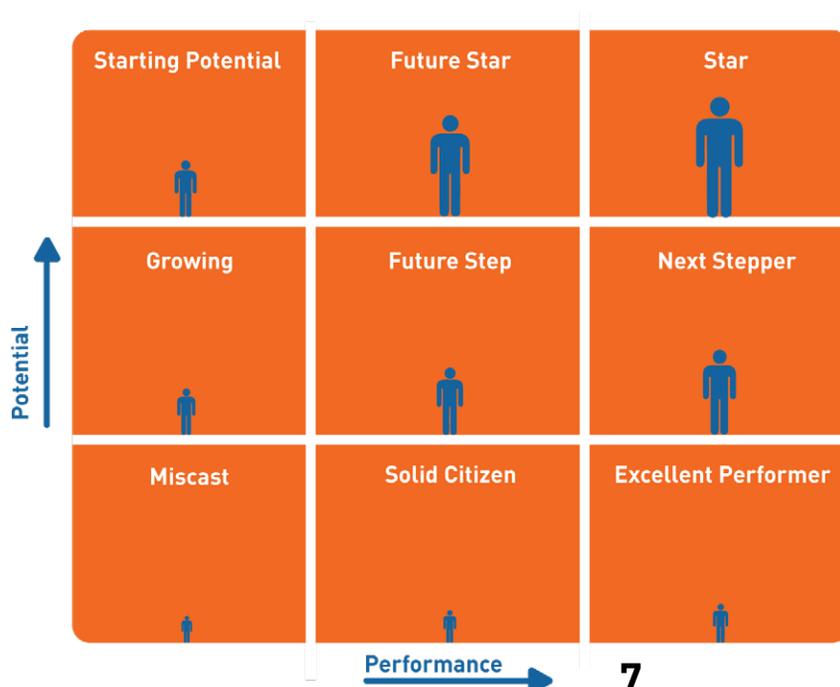


When examining Learning Agility in relation to job level within the engineering field, Mental Agility remains the highest scoring dimension overall. It is interesting that for overall Learning Agility and four of the five dimensions, as level increases so do results. The exception is People Agility, where the higher the function, the lower the score. These results align with other studies into Learning Agility and job level.

2017-2018: Learning Agility in Succession Planning and Teams

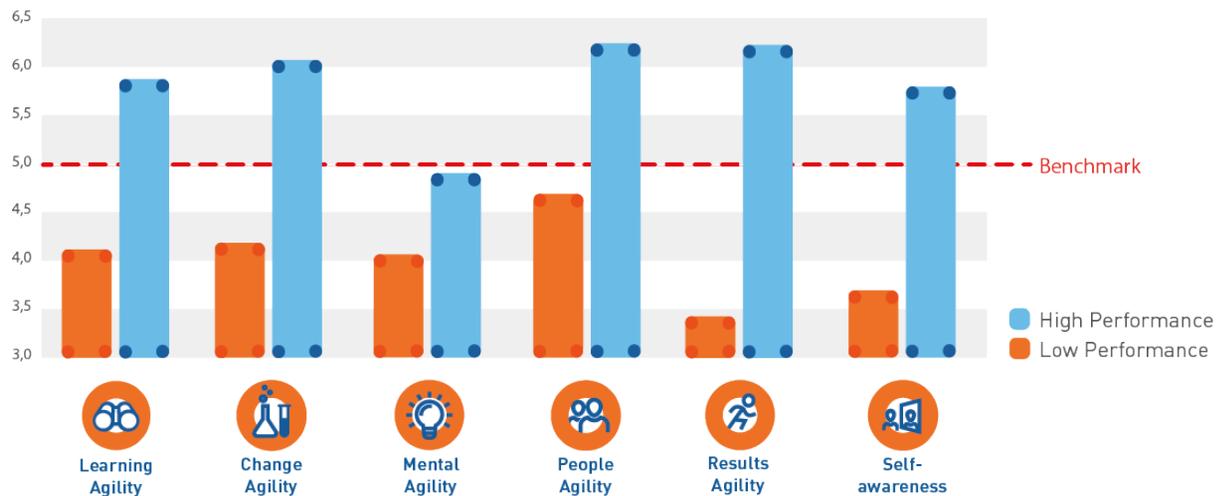
Succession Planning

HR are frequently asked to answer the following question: who are the leaders of tomorrow? If you display an overall view of employee potential and performance in a 9-grid matrix (here: the larger the figure, the higher the score on Learning Agility), you see a clear pattern of results for both performance and potential. As both potential and performance increase, so too does Learning Agility. This provides strong support for the use of Learning Agility within succession planning strategies.



Learning agile teams as the drivers of the organisation

Another question we often encounter is: how do you put together the ideal team? Does everyone in a team have to score high on Learning Agility or is a specific pattern of dimension scores more important? Our team analysis, which compared Low Performance and High Performance teams as decided by organisational performance data, showed the following pattern of Learning Agility results:



High Performance Teams score significantly higher on Overall Learning Agility and on each of the five dimensions. The smallest difference occurs on Mental Agility, while the biggest differences occur on the dimensions of People Agility, Results Agility and Self-awareness. It seems that having a strong group goal-orientation, as well as a focus on where the team as a whole needs to develop, is a recipe for strong performance.

What the team analysis also discovered was that the ratio of high and low learning agile members had a significant impact on overall performance. Within the High Performance Teams, 90% of members had high Learning Agility results, while only 10% scored low on Learning Agility. The reverse was true for Low Performance Teams. This indicates that it is not sufficient to include one or two learning agile individuals into a team to increase performance; the group as a whole needs to think and behave in an agile manner in order to succeed.

More information

Find out what HFMTalentindex can do for your organisation.

 010 276 0418 | 021 824 009

 supportsa@hfmtalentindex.com

 www.hfmtalentindex.co.za

 [HFMTalentindex South Africa](#)

 [@HFMTalentSA](#)