

The Untapped Resource in Your Organization: It's Not Tech, It's Your *Teams*.

Dynamic agility, vital for optimal performance in today's environment, necessitates a shift towards agile teaming. Companies must abandon past management practices that are no longer effective, master core capabilities like rapid problem-solving and continuous learning, and consistently apply agile teaming principles. **by Nathan Holt**

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The Performance Puzzle: Potential Held Hostage

We all know the feeling: organizations brimming with potential, yet somehow...stuck. As leaders, we see the headlines about navigating disruption and the urgent need for agility. We invest in technology, training, and maybe even the latest collaboration tools. But are we truly unlocking the performance we crave?

Recently, wrestling with an old grandfather clock that had stopped chiming, I realized something profound. I could tinker with individual gears, clean and oil them, yet the clock remained stubbornly silent. Why? Because I was missing

the point. I was focusing on parts, not the *system*. I didn't grasp how those intricate components *interacted* to tell time.

Isn't this often true in our organizations today? We focus on individual initiatives—psychological safety programs, leadership training—valuable gears in themselves. Yet, if the underlying operating model—the very mechanism connecting those gears—is outdated, are we truly driving systemic performance improvement? Or are we simply adding shiny new parts to a clock that's fundamentally broken?

Consider this: You might invest heavily in fostering psychological safety, encouraging open communication and problem identification. Teams diligently surface issues, bottlenecks, and improvement opportunities—fantastic! But what happens next? If you haven't also developed robust systems for problem-solving, rapid response, and continuous improvement, you've essentially just amplified the noise without increasing your ability to act on it. You might have more problems identified, but not necessarily more problems solved. This is the danger of a fragmented approach—optimizing parts without considering the whole.

The 20th-Century Handbrake: An Outdated Operating Model

The 20th-century management model, inherited from the Industrial Age, served a different world. Built on principles pioneered by Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Ford, it prioritized efficiency through control. This model, while undeniably yielding significant productivity gains during the industrial era, is now a *handbrake* on organizational agility. Why? Because the game has fundamentally changed.

Feature	20 th Century Industrial Era Operating Model	21 st Century Agile Operating Model
Focus	Efficiency, control	Agility, adaptability, learning
Structure	Hierarchical, top-down	Flatter, collaborative, networked
Decision-making	Centralized	Decentralized, empowered teams
Communication	Top-down	Multi-directional, open
Motivation	Fear-based, extrinsic rewards, individual pay-for-performance	Intrinsic motivation, purpose-driven, teamwork and shared rewards
Production	Mass production	Customization, personalization
Employee role	Following instructions	Problem-solving, innovating
View of failure	Something to be avoided	Opportunity for learning

Today's work is knowledge-based, demanding creativity and complex problem-solving. Our workforce is more educated, expecting autonomy and meaningful contribution. And the

business environment? It's a whirlwind of disruption, demanding rapid adaptation and continuous innovation. The old clock simply can't keep pace.

And while few of us face an existential threat like Blockbuster or Kodak, many organizations are experiencing a different kind of crisis—a crisis of unrealized potential. It's that nagging feeling that we're capable of so much more, yet constantly held back by outdated ways of working.

Unlocking Dynamic Agility: The Power of Teams

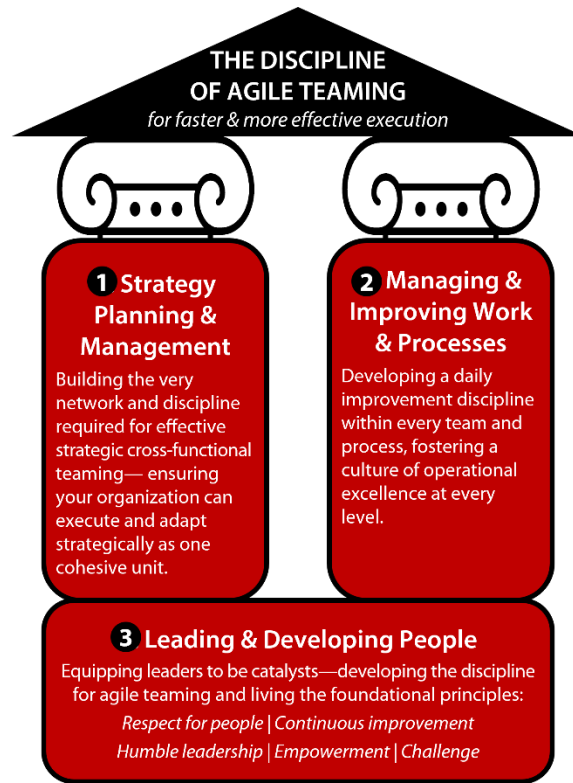
Organizations that thrive today, those consistently outperforming in this dynamic world, possess *dynamic agility*. This isn't just about speed; it's about the ability to rapidly sense change, learn, adapt, and execute with velocity. And the engine of dynamic agility? **High-performing teams.**

Building this teaming capability isn't just about personality tests and communication workshops (though helpful). It's about a fundamental shift in our operating model. It's about embracing a new discipline of teaming—new rules, new tools, and new mindsets that collectively foster continuous learning, rapid problem-solving, and high-velocity execution.

Mastering Agile Teaming: Three Game-Changing Capabilities

I've dedicated the last 27 years to one thing: driving dramatic performance improvements in organizations. Across 25 company and division-level strategic turnarounds, spanning diverse industries and hundreds of teams, I've seen what works and what doesn't. My perspective is further sharpened by a decade of mentorship under executives who engineered decades of industry-leading performance at world-class companies, and my role as a Shingo Prize examiner assessing operational excellence at the highest level. My conclusion is unequivocal: *agile teaming* is the critical discipline for sustained high performance.

This discipline isn't a vague concept; it's built upon mastering three core, game-changing capabilities that act as pillars for organizational agility and sustained high performance:



By focusing on these three interconnected areas, you move beyond simply *hoping* for better teamwork and instead cultivate a system designed for sustained high performance and dynamic agility.

Just like fixing that grandfather clock required understanding the *system*, unlocking your organization's true potential requires rethinking your operating model and embracing the discipline of agile teaming. It's time to move beyond tinkering and fundamentally rewire how your teams work.

We invite you to contact our founder to learn more about the details of our agile teaming model.:

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Nathan Holt is a seasoned expert in company turnarounds, having successfully transformed more than 25 businesses across various industries. He leverages his skills in strategy, culture transformation, continuous improvement, and leadership development to unlock billions in growth and hidden savings for his clients. He started his career at Accenture and Lean Horizons, where he learned how to deliver efficiency and stability for Fortune 500s facing growth and change challenges. He also worked closely with former Toyota and Danaher executives for 15 years, learning from their Lean business systems that are world-renowned for their success.

Nathan's in-house leadership roles at Avery Dennison and Office Depot in the mid-2000s helped restore their fiscal health, boost their workforce resilience, and reverse their declining stock trends. Since 2011, he has focused his expertise on the energy sector, working as a continuous improvement executive at Shell. In 2022, he founded Ultimate Performance (www.UltimatePerformance.biz), a consultancy that empowers energy companies to build operational excellence capability and high-performance cultures.

Nathan holds an MBA in international business and a bachelor's in industrial engineering. He is also a Shingo organizational excellence examiner and a M&A post-merger integration advisor, further demonstrating his credentials as a champion of lean excellence.