



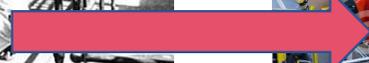
# Why scalable learning is replacing scalable efficiency

By Sylvain Cottong, co-founder of the HOW Institute

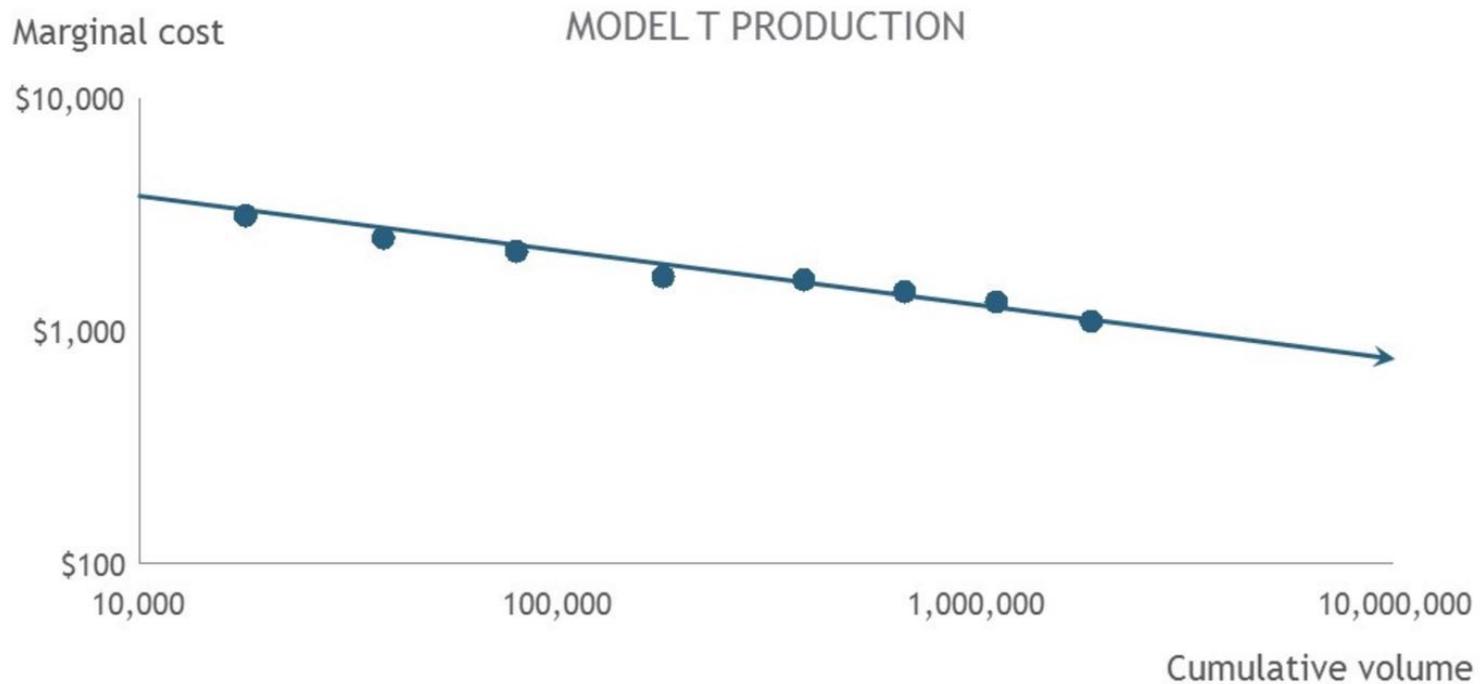


April 23, 2020  
Webinar

For almost 200 years, business was about doing the same thing better and better:  
An economy driven by scalable efficiency

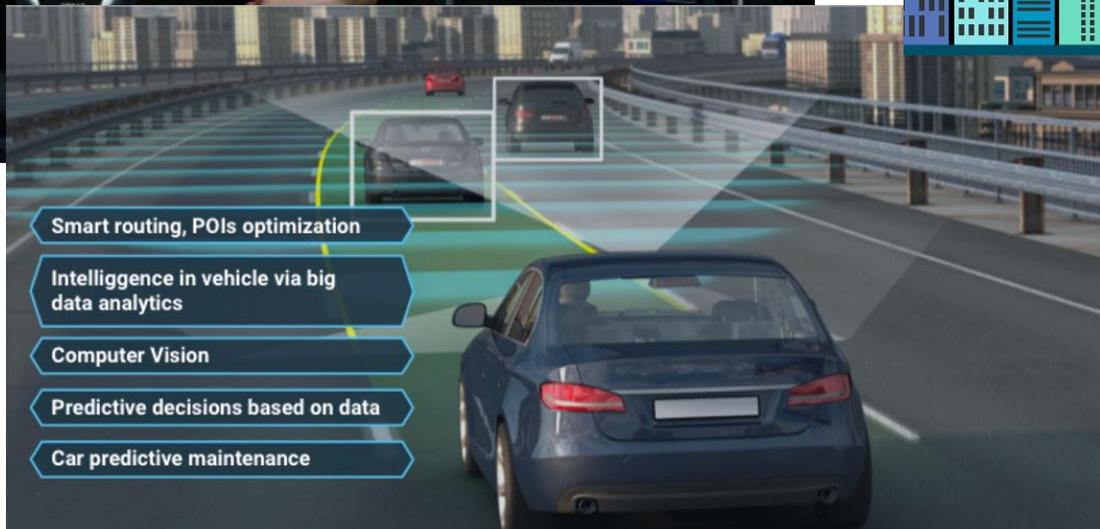


## Exhibit 1 | The traditional experience curve

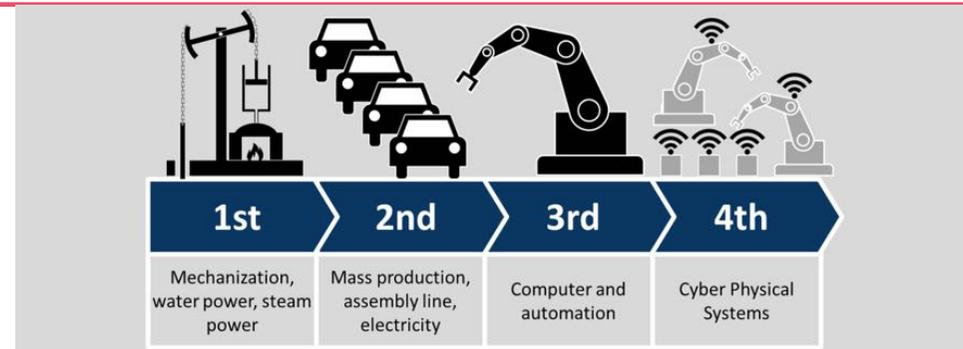


Note: Covers 1909-1916 period; costs in constant 1968 dollars  
Source: Henderson (1974); BCG Henderson Institute

And today ?



## Today: Exponential business transformation



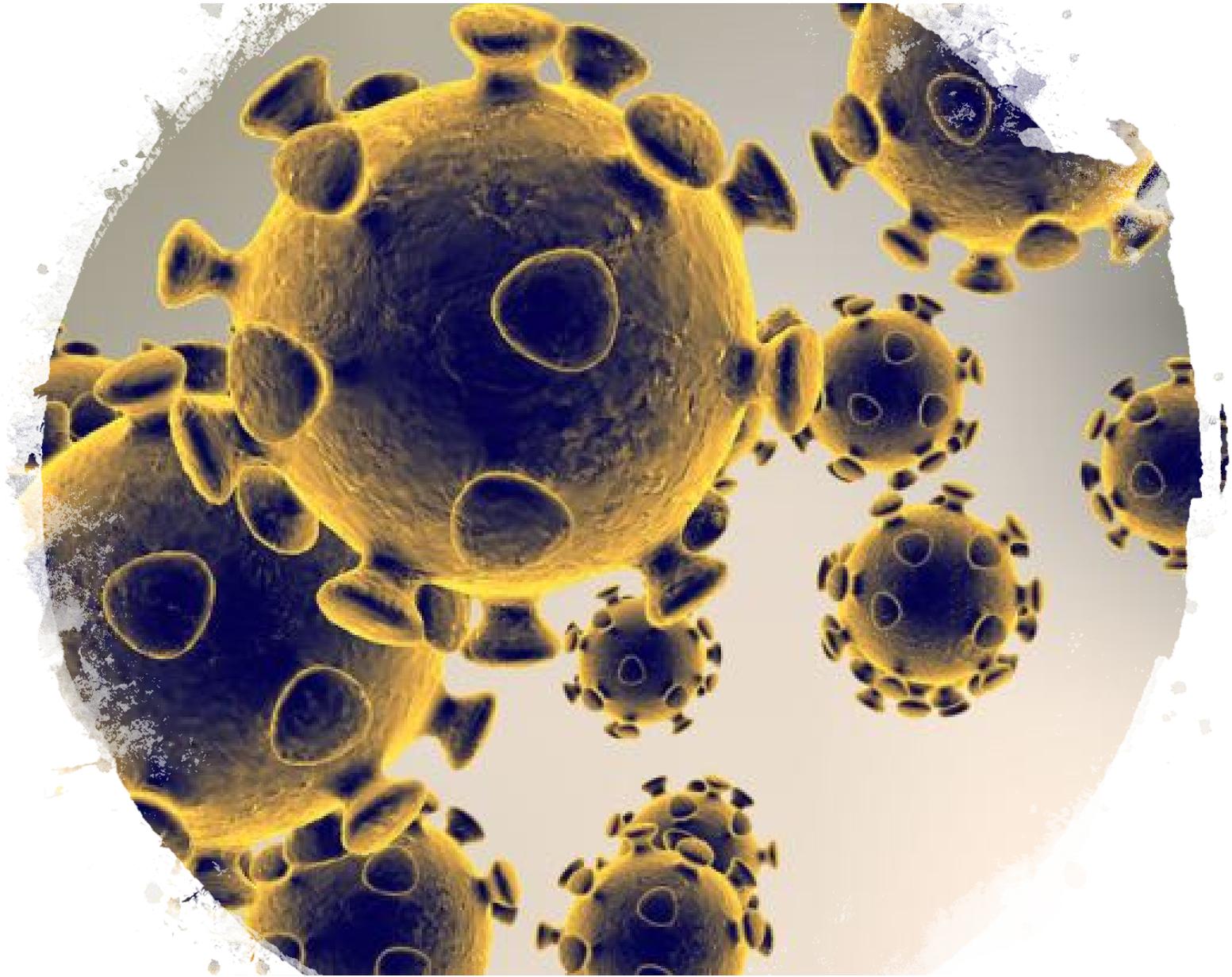
- We entered the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution
- Driven by digital transformation, IoT, AI, Big Data, cyber-physical systems
- Inducing rapid disruption of traditional business models & emergence of completely new business models and opportunities
- The same applies to management models (i.e. agile, flat hierarchies, self-organising teams..etc)
- Product and innovation life cycles get shorter
- At the same time customers have higher expectations for personalized solutions
- Consequences: shorter half-time of human skills in general & higher importance of soft-skills

## Longer term contextual shifts accelerate as well

- **Political outcomes** are becoming more unpredictable and disruptive
- **International institutions** are becoming less stable
- **Social inequality** continues to rise within and between nations (populism, migratory movements)
- **Ecological risks & threats** rise exponentially
- **Shifting generational values** are reshaping the nature of consumption
- **Social backlash to business** is occurring more frequently and on a larger scale
- Technology is **changing the skills** required of workers and the nature of work

These non-competitive issues are becoming both less predictable and more relevant to long-run company performance, demanding correspondingly more attention.





# VUCA

Volatile

The environment demands you react quickly to ongoing changes that are unpredictable and out of your control

---

Uncertain

The environment requires you to take action without certainty

---

Complex

The environment is dynamic, with many interdependencies

---

Ambiguous

The environment is unfamiliar, outside of your expertise

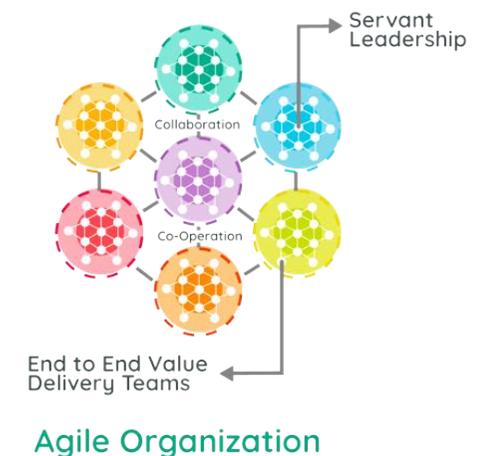
## Organizational design

---

- Traditional organizational hierarchies **can only react slowly** and have limited decision-making bandwidth
- **Autonomous learning bypasses traditional managerial hierarchy** that has traditionally defined companies.

Instead, when properly designed, companies become “self-tuning” — sensing changes in the market immediately and responding quickly.

This may be uncomfortable for executives who came of age in an era dominated by managerial decision-making



Scalable learning is replacing scalable efficiency as the single most important parameter for organizational performance and resilience.

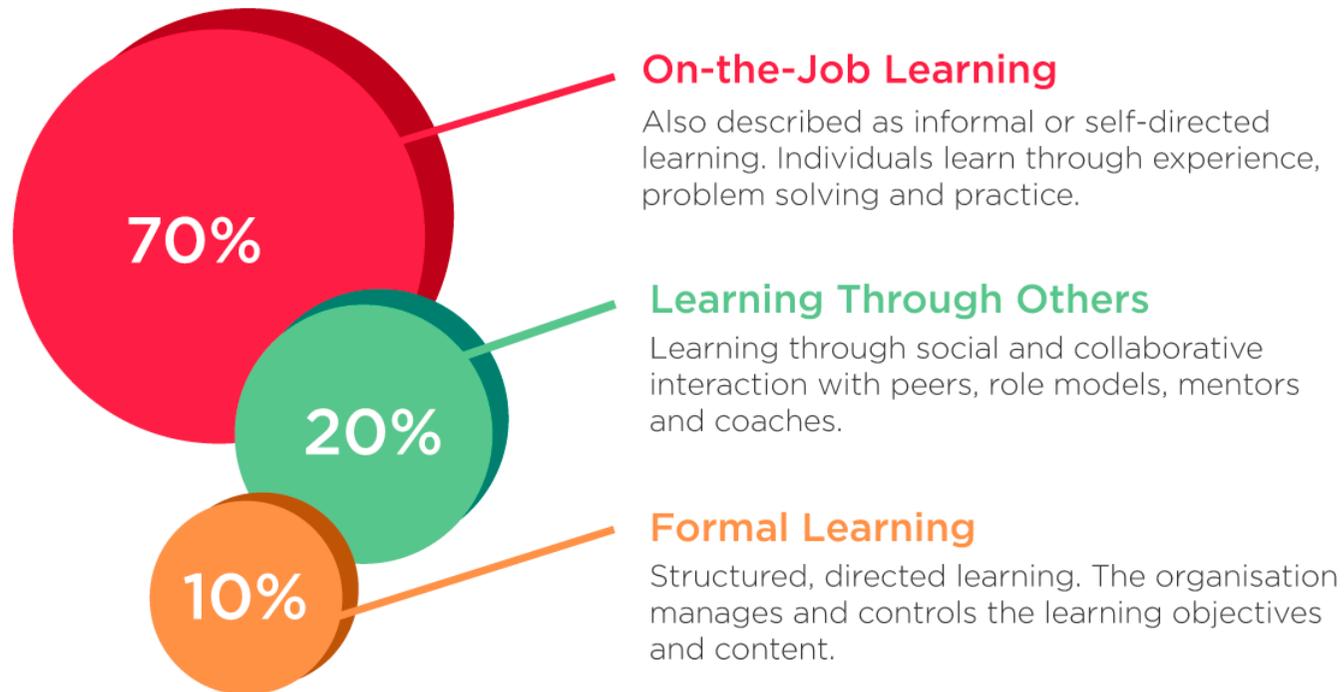


- Learning faster than competitors
- Combining short term-automated learning (by machines) with longer term contextual learning (by humans)

# What does that mean for the Learning and Development function (in HR) ?

## 70-20-10 learning framework

---



## Traditional formal learning challenges

---

Traditional classroom settings for learning present a series of challenges and inefficiencies:

- They are a **one-size-fits-all** and are not tailored to the individual learners' needs (too generic, not timely).
- Learners more and more complain about **not having the time** any more to quit the workplace for day long trainings (and those who have time are sometimes considered as less engaged)
- They are **expensive and not well scalable**
- They are sometimes **used by the C-level** for presenting shining data about how they care about their employees
- Many studies show that after one month, learners on average **only remember 10 %** of what they have learned in a formal training
- Idem, if new knowledge is not applied within a very short time, it gets forgotten again (therefore, learning on the job works best)







## Agile learning

---

Learning today already has become as colorful as a rainbow:

- from 5-minute microlearning to full time camp's
- analog, digital, hybrid, blended
- self, peer, group, social, mooc
- various methods and formats
- holistic approach (mindset, skillset, toolset)
- continuous setups, journeys, safaris



## Agile learning explained

---

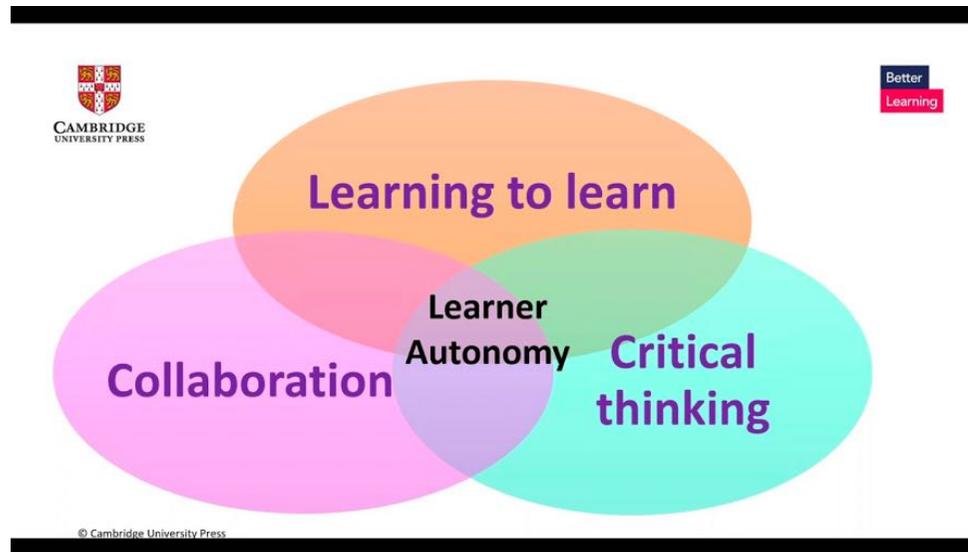
- Different learning formats, digital and non-digital
- Within a designed frame of possibilities – partially location and time independent
- Where learners can define their individual learning curricula following emerging and contextual needs
- Where learners can learn autonomously – in the flow of work, as competence needs arise - alone or in groups of peers from inside and/or outside of the organization
- Where each member of a group helps others to achieve their competence targets
- Under the loose supervision of a learning path coach where needed.



## Agile learning: Learner autonomy

---

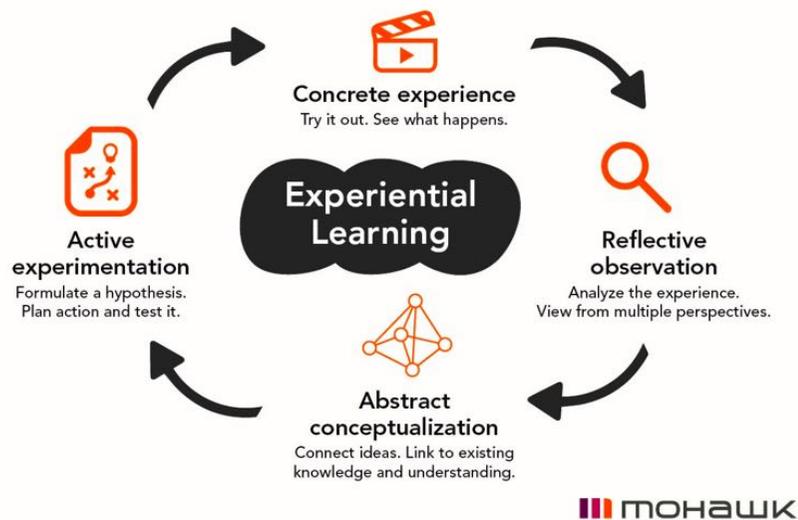
*Agile Learning* gives more autonomy & responsibility of learning to the individual learner for his personalized learning paths (no one size fits all). It is 'learning on demand'.



# Agile learning: Social, experiential & blended

## Agile Learning is

- Blended (digital and non-digital)
- Social (often happens in groups of peers) &
- Experiential (happens through active work and experimentation)



which prove being significantly more efficient than formal learning.

## Agile learning: Diversity of formats

---

*Agile Learning* consists of :

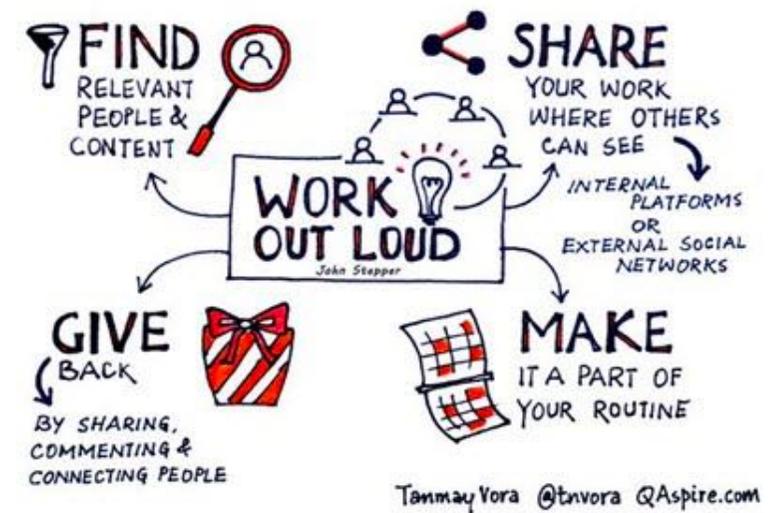
- Micro-learning (short tutorials on demand)
- Macro-learning (larger curricula mostly for certification)
- Classroom learning (usually only a small percentage of total learning activities)
- Individual coaching and mentorship.



## Agile learning: New frameworks

*Agile Learning* embraces new innovative learning frameworks such as :

- WoL (Working out Loud) circles
- Communities of Practice (CoPs)
- Learning expeditions
- Job rotations
- Expert Interviews
- Onboarding Processes
- Barcamps
- Hackathons
- Fablabs, Innovation labs
- ...etc.



## Agile learning content

---

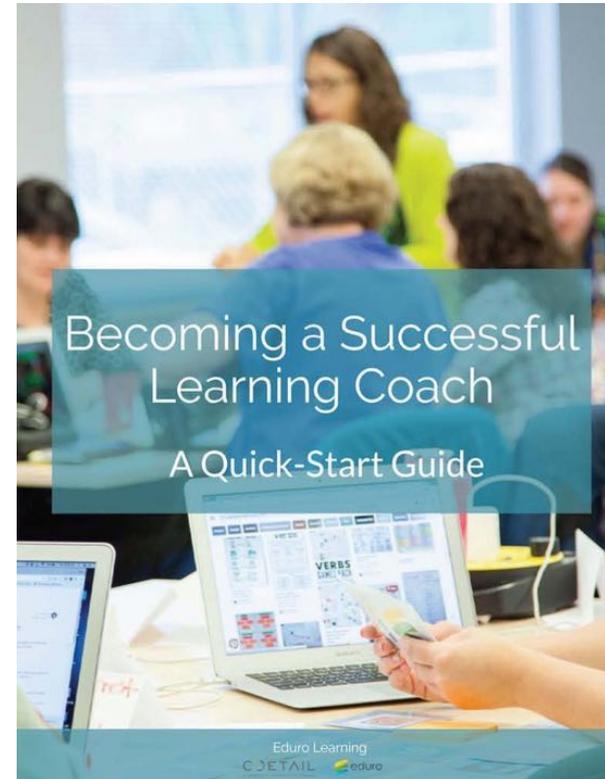
*Agile Learning* requires external expert content as well as user generated content.



## Agile learning: New role for teachers: learning coach

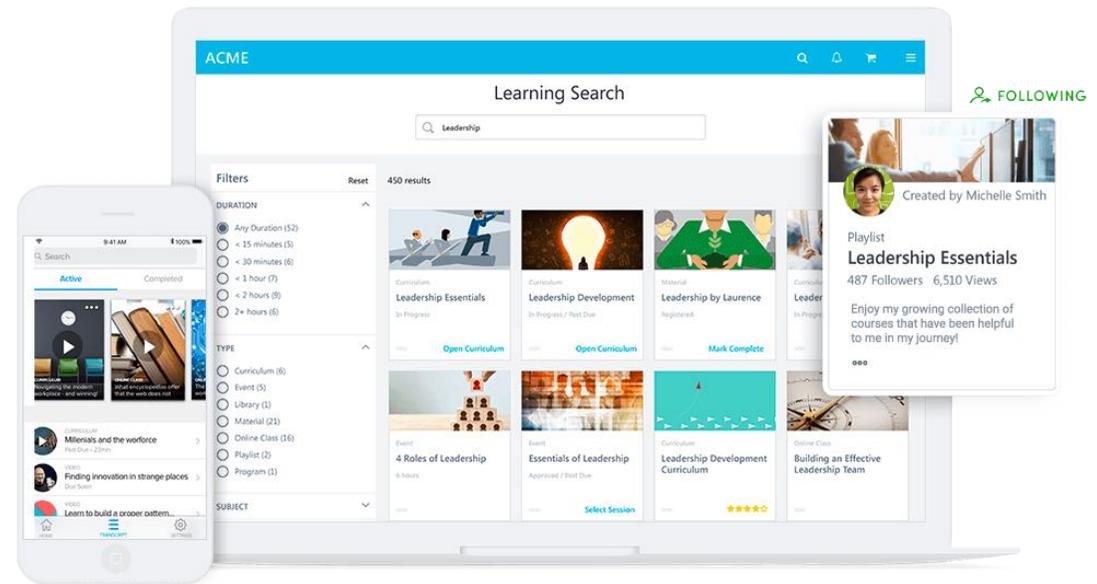
---

*Agile Learning* changes the role of the traditional classroom teacher towards the role of a learning path coach.



## Agile learning & tools

*Agile Learning* makes extensive use of new collaborative and distributed technologies such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), Enterprise Social Networks (ESN) and more recently highly engaging **Learning Experience Platforms (LXP)** as well as consequent learning analytics data.



### How LXPs Recommend Content

Skills Based	Usage Based	AI Content Based
LXP uses a skills model that is mapped to job roles, including skills assessment by self and peers	LXP recommends content based on who viewed most, who viewed last, who like you viewed content	LXP crawls and understands the content itself, creates pedagogical maps, recommends and assesses content and can create assessments.
Good for traditional enterprise training and education.	Good for B2C and vendors with large content libraries	The future: AI-based content discovery for any type of content including documentation and books

## Agile learning positively effects employee engagement

---

*Agile Learning* increases employee engagement, satisfaction, motivation, experience and performance.



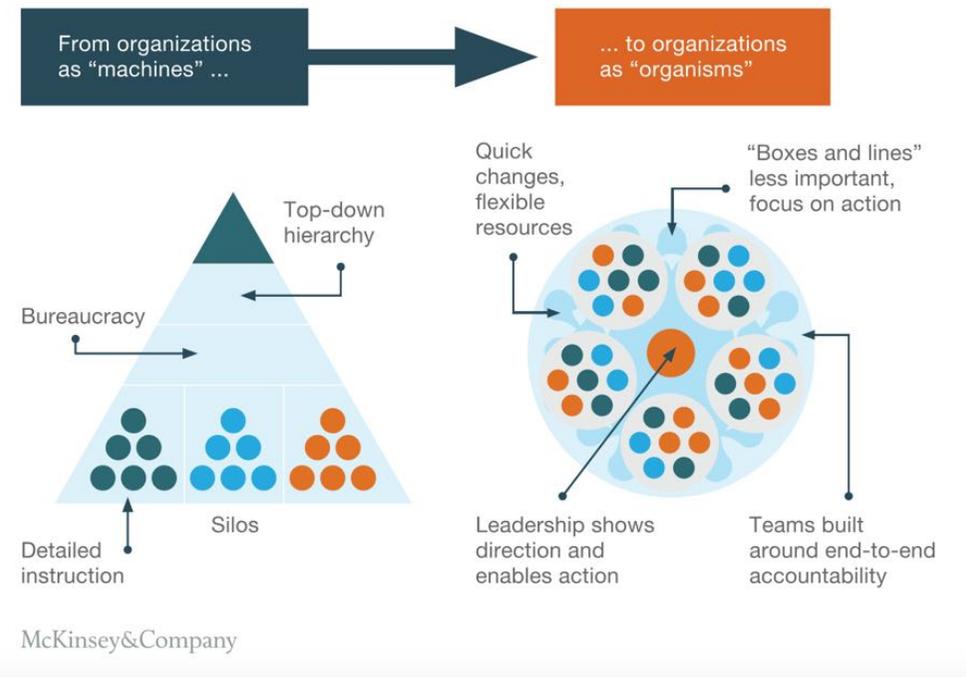
## Agile learning & agile management

*Agile Learning* is part of **agile management** which is the new management paradigm for the VUCA world:

- constantly creating customer & brand value in self-organizing teams
- that are connected through transparent interactive (open) networks
- within loose hierarchies and using the latest collaborative technologies.

Agile Learning thus requires the agile mindset to work out.

Rather than organization as machine, the agile organization is a living organism



## What we have learned

---

1. Business & technology is changing at an exponential rate (4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution)
2. Non-competitive societal & environmental contexts get more unstable and unpredictable as well (VUCA world)
3. Thus, the ability to learn & react fast becomes mandatory: Scalable efficiency is being replaced by scalable learning as the single most important driver for organizational resilience and performance
4. Traditional formal learning settings alone are not suited anymore for dealing with this new reality
5. New, more holistic and dynamic learning frameworks & tools need to be put in place in order to deal with these challenges: Agile Learning based on Empowerment Didactics.
6. For agile learning to work, organizations also need to adapt their culture towards more transparency, radical collaboration, less hierarchies & more autonomy to workers & teams: The characteristics of agile organizations
7. And last but not least, better individual learning opportunities increase worker/employee engagement
8. And finally, based on these findings, HR will be an increasingly strategic activity within organizations as a whole.



Thank you for your attention !  
[sylvain@how-institute.eu](mailto:sylvain@how-institute.eu)