



full potential group
activating people, performance, results



Activating Agility
performance and wellbeing simpler, better, faster
by coaching neuro-agility.

Agility

the ability to move, think and understand quickly and easily

Business agility allows organisations to respond rapidly to changes in the internal and external environment without losing momentum or vision. Adaptability, flexibility and balance are 3 qualities essential to long-term agility.

Organisational **agility** is a core differentiator in today's rapidly changing **business** environment. Organisations need to be agile enough to anticipate fundamental marketplace shifts and reshape their **business** priorities in response to the market movements.

Business agility is important for firms looking to survive long-term and who work in quick-paced industries. Innovation is often the key to maintaining long-term business agility. Companies that don't innovate and rely on 'proven' methods of doing things often find themselves falling behind the competition because they can't adapt quickly enough to shifts in the environment.

Agility allows organisations to out-think, out-learn and out-perform the competition

From an HR perspective, agility is about ensuring the human capital in the organisation have the skills and abilities to respond quickly to new developments and the infrastructure and processes to mobilise this human capital into action as efficiently as possible. People need to be more agile, adaptive and flexible, **able to achieve more with less**. Doing things simpler, better, faster, is the new prevailing mantra for leaders everywhere, but to enable leaders to do this, leadership development specialists need to know how to activate more of a leaders' agile potential.

Simpler

We process 30x more information than 20 years ago



Better

80-90% of serious injuries & accidents attributed to human error



Faster

60-70% of current jobs are likely to be redundant in 10 years

5 of the most desirable leadership skills in 2020 and beyond will be agile brainpower skills World Economic Forum

Simpler, better, faster is a great business mantra in this era of more agile working. It is widely accepted that people are an organisation's most valuable asset, and in many cases the most expensive, so supporting and challenging leaders and managers to do things simpler, better and faster is the key to gaining business agility, competitive edge and future proofing growth - but it can be hard to do.



According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) report, *The Future of Jobs*, five of the most desirable skills in the next decade will be head-based, "brain power" skills.

Brainpower skills of complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, judgment and decision making, and cognitive flexibility will be amongst the most desirable skills most in demand by 2020.

Our brains use these core skills to think, read, learn, remember, reason, and pay attention. Working together, they take incoming information and move it into the bank of knowledge leaders use every day. Anyone who functions well cognitively can quickly process various mental activities most closely associated with learning and problem solving.

Critical thinking is key to success in any industry as people that are good at this can analyse information objectively and make reasoned judgments. They evaluate data, facts and observable phenomena; discriminate between valuable and less valuable information; and then draw clear conclusions to help solve a problem, or make a decision.



“The modern learner is overwhelmed, distracted and impatient” Bersin by Deloitte

Against this contextual backdrop of leaders needing to boost their agility, Bersin research by Deloitte confirms that today's employees are overwhelmed, distracted and impatient. **Flexibility** in when, where and how they learn is increasingly important. They want to learn from their peers and managers, (so using a coaching and mentoring style of leadership is even more critical). And they are taking control over their own development (so enabling them to personalise their own learning is also very important).

MEET THE MODERN LEARNER

As training moves to more digital formats, it's colliding with new realities in learners' jobs, behaviors, habits, and preferences.

Today's employees are overwhelmed, distracted, and impatient. Flexibility in where where and how they learn is increasingly important. They want to learn from their peers and managers as much as from experts. And they're taking more control over their *own* development.



1%
of a typical workweek
is all that employees
have to focus on
training and
development

UNTETHERED

Today's employees find themselves working from several locations and structuring their work in nontraditional ways to accommodate their lifestyles. Companies are finding it difficult to reach these people consistently and even harder to develop them efficiently.



ON-DEMAND

Employees are accessing information—and learning—differently than they did just a few years ago. Most are looking for answers outside of traditional training and development channels. For example:



COLLABORATIVE

Learners are also developing and accessing personal and professional networks to obtain information about their industries and professions.



EMPOWERED

Rapid change in business and organizations means everyone needs to constantly be learning. More and more people are looking for options on their own because they aren't getting what they need from their employers.



Bersin
by Deloitte.

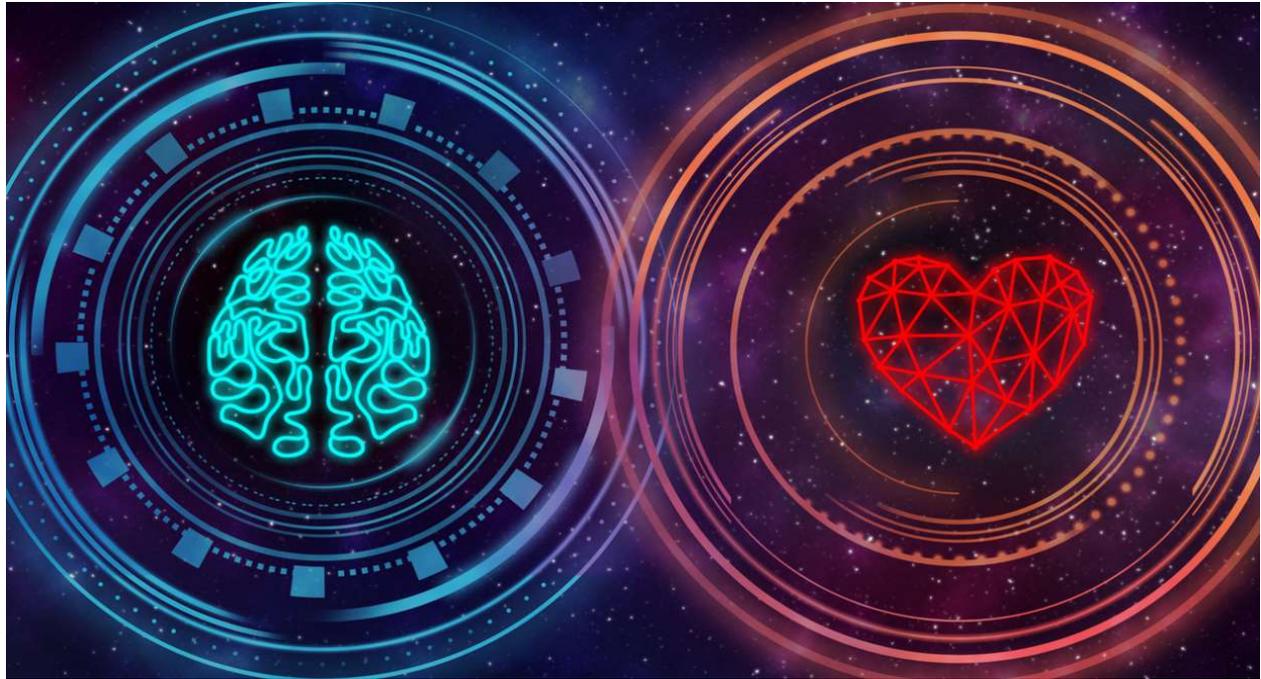
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"Engaging Disengaged Learners" Growth Mastery
"Can We Use Information Through Mobile Connections" Asia Research
"Here's a Google Plus: Any Company Can Invite"

Helping leaders become more flexible in the way they use their brains will support them to become more agile in the way they operate.

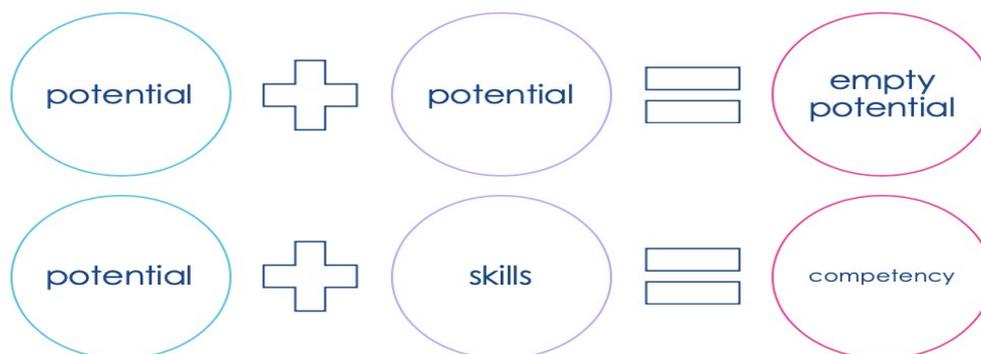
Linked to this, we can catalyse leaders to improve complex problem solving. This is defined as 'a collection of self-regulated psychological processes and activities necessary in dynamic environments to achieve ill-defined goals that cannot be reached by routine actions'.

Finally, helping leaders to flex their creativity and become more innovative (use their imagination or original ideas to be inventive), to come up with creative combinations of knowledge and a broad set of strategies to drive the right solution and best result will be key in 2020 and beyond.

“Helping people understand their own brain, how they learn and increasing their flexibility and adaptability, will fast-track their productivity, performance and wellbeing” Carole Gaskell, FPG



The key to unlocking potential is to use a blend of existing and new approaches that boost and align both the head and heart intelligence of leaders. Being equipped with brain power skills will activate head potential and developing motivational intelligence skills will activate heart potential.



Improve flexibility, adaptability & performance – Neuro-agility

Why Neuro-Agility

Today's world is rapidly changing, as it becomes more complex and as it acquires a faster pace. Information is more than doubling every year, consequently, an average worker must process more than 30 times more information than 20 years ago. We are exposed to significantly more data in one day than people would be throughout their lifetime a few centuries ago.

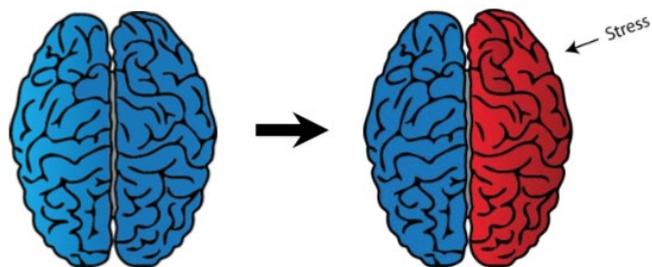
What Potential?

To get some perspective on how much potential our brains have, consider that we typically have a trillion (1000 billion) brain cells in total. These include 100 billion active nerve cells and 900 billion others that are responsible for gluing, nourishing and insulating the active ones. One brain cell (neuron) can



make 100,000 connections and can process 1000 impulses per second. This results in 2.5 to 3.5 billion connections per second. This demonstrates that, in a positive environment and with appropriate skills, our brains have immense power.

There are benefits to the expansion of information available in terms of technological advancement, cultural openness, business development, etc. however, there is a big threat of feeling overwhelmed by the volume. Just to write a proposal a couple of pages long, people may trawl the internet, read books and research papers to ensure they are correct and precise, as well as original and innovative in



their pitch. This process can cause high levels of stress and overwhelm. It is estimated that 75-90% of illnesses have their origin in chronic stress and information overload is causing a large part of it.

It is important for leaders to harness their agile human brainpower alongside artificial intelligence.

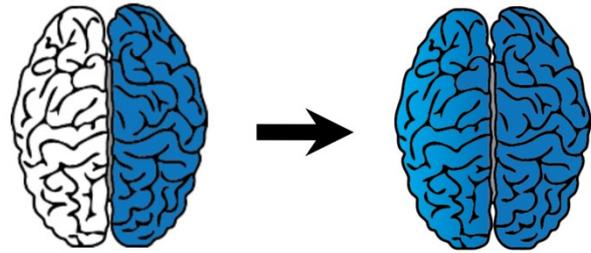
To limit the pressure on our brains and to cope with the abundant amount of information, we resort in technology to aid with memory, calculations, directions, instructions, vocabularies and so on. The result is a lack of intellectual exercise and support by our natural ability to think, learn, remember and calculate – which is our innate competitive advantage. Technology is undoubtedly a useful tool and helps in many ways; however, leaders shouldn't stop using and optimising their brain's potential by stretching and flexing their minds.

HUMAN BRAIN	ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
Pattern recognition and matching	Linear and sequential processing
Creative	Linear and repetitive
Process information slowly	Process information fast
Good at coaching	Good at instruction
Finds meaning from information	Provides information/content
Good at innovation	Good at improvisation
Experiential learning	Rote learning
Focuses on the why and how	Focuses on the what and how
Thinker	Expert
Solve complex problems	Identifies problems
Limited memory	Unlimited memory
Emotion	Reason
People industries	Machine industries
Dynamic content	Set content

Our brains have capabilities that technology doesn't have, such as making predictions about the future, solving complex problems, performing counterfactual thinking, being creative, reflecting and judging. These cognitive processes are naturally human, nevertheless businesses continue to replace human workforce with machines to increase productivity and reduce human error.

Routine and repetitive jobs will be up taken by machines, putting artificial intelligence in direct competition with people. To prevent people from losing their jobs to machines, there is a need to reduce the impact stress has on performance, to reduce human error and to upskill people, particularly using those abilities that are our competitive advantage. Therefore, coping with stress and learning new skills quickly are a priority that leaders need to prepare themselves and their teams for.

Brain agility is about the readiness of all senses and brain regions to function as one integrated whole-brain system, being receptive and responsive to bio-chemical impulses at optimum capacity under new, and potentially stressful, conditions.



This means a leader with an agile brain can learn new skills faster and cope with stress better than a person with an unfit brain. Neuro-agility will prepare us for the future and its disruptive changes to out-think, out-learn and out-perform machines.

What is Neuro-agility

Neuro-agility is evaluated in two dimensions. One dimension assesses a person's neurophysiological components that influence flexibility in thinking and learning – this indicates a person's natural preference or dominance. The second dimension measures the drivers that impact brain performance – indicating the parameters that can be optimised for improved outcomes.



Neurological Design: 7 factors

1. Relative lateral dominance
2. Receptive and expressive
3. Rational and emotional
4. Information processing style
5. Four brain quadrants
6. Sensory preference
7. Intelligence preference

Performance: 6 drivers

1. Brain fitness
2. Stress management
3. Sleep
4. Movement
5. Attitude
6. Nutrition

The idea is that our brains are composed of different parts that communicate with each other to deliver memory, thought processes, skills, bodily functions, etc. As our brains develop, the communication between certain parts becomes strengthened by consistent use, while other connections weaken as they become superfluous. This results in neurological wiring that depends on habit and individual preference, determining our unique design.

A leader's neurological design is dependent on:

1. Relative lateral hemispheric dominance;
2. Expressive or receptive preference;
3. Rational or emotional preference;
4. Four figurative learning and thinking languages;
5. Brain and sensory information processing styles;
6. Sensory preference;
7. Intelligence preferences.

The combination of preferences and dominances creates the person's unique way of thinking and processing information. When someone has a strong orientation towards one preference, it is likely that their non-dominant component is not sufficiently reinforced to work effectively. Becoming neuro-agile means to be able to use all parts of the brain equally and simultaneously to efficiently access all brain functions.

Since preferences are a combination of genetic predispositions and habit reinforcement, we can rewire our brains to a certain extent, by adjusting customs that impinge on the optimal brain performance. Brain agility and performance depend on:

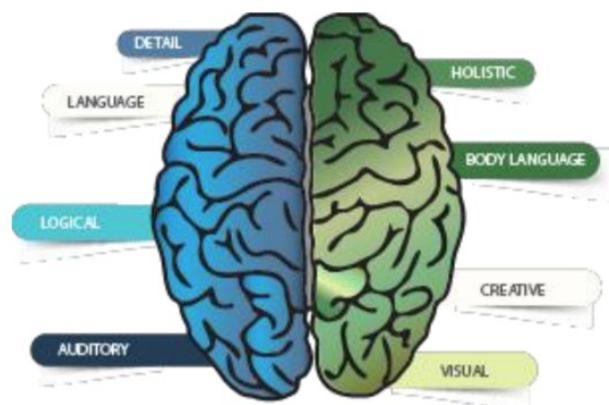
- Brain fitness
- Stress management
- Sleep
- Movement
- Attitude
- Nutrition

Improving these drivers allows the brain to function better and more efficiently to become more agile and flexible in employing more of its functions simultaneously.

Neurological Design

Relative lateral hemispheric dominance

The brain has a left hemisphere and a right hemisphere, which are in constant communication with one another. Each side is specialised in certain functions that process information at different levels. The left hemisphere is sequential, analytical and logical, it is oriented towards time and prefers language and word input (particularly auditory). The right hemisphere is holistic, intuitive and visual, responding to images and graphs. It is responsible for visual-spatial and visual-motor skills.

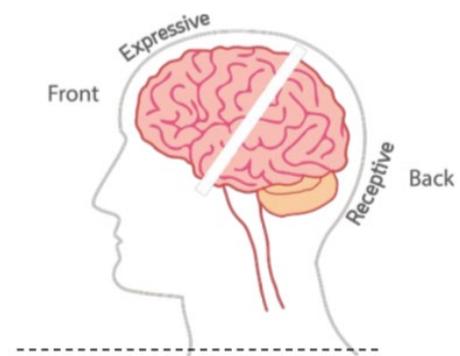


One hemisphere dominates over the other, differentiating the way people first respond to information. Leaders who are left-brain dominant are likely to be more logical and detail-orientated, preferring detailed analysis, resulting in an interest towards finance, academics and science. Those who are right-brain dominant prefer visuals and generalised information, these leaders will tend to focus on the bigger picture, think outside the box and be creative. However, although our instinct drives us to gather input via our dominant side, we subsequently assimilate it through our non-dominant side as well.

With a neuro-agile brain, leaders will be able to process information leading with their preferred hemisphere, but simultaneously using the other one. This enables rapid learning and improves performance, because the brain is working flexibly on multiple levels, rather than being slowed down by alternatively switching from one side to the other.

Expressive or receptive preference

We learn information by absorbing it in the back of the brain, in the limbic system; the electrochemical activity subsequently moves towards the frontal lobe, resulting in the outward expression of thoughts. When processing and learning information, some leaders prefer to reflect on it and observe their thoughts and understanding – receptive preference – while others prefer to verbally communicate and discuss their thoughts to learn – expressive preference.

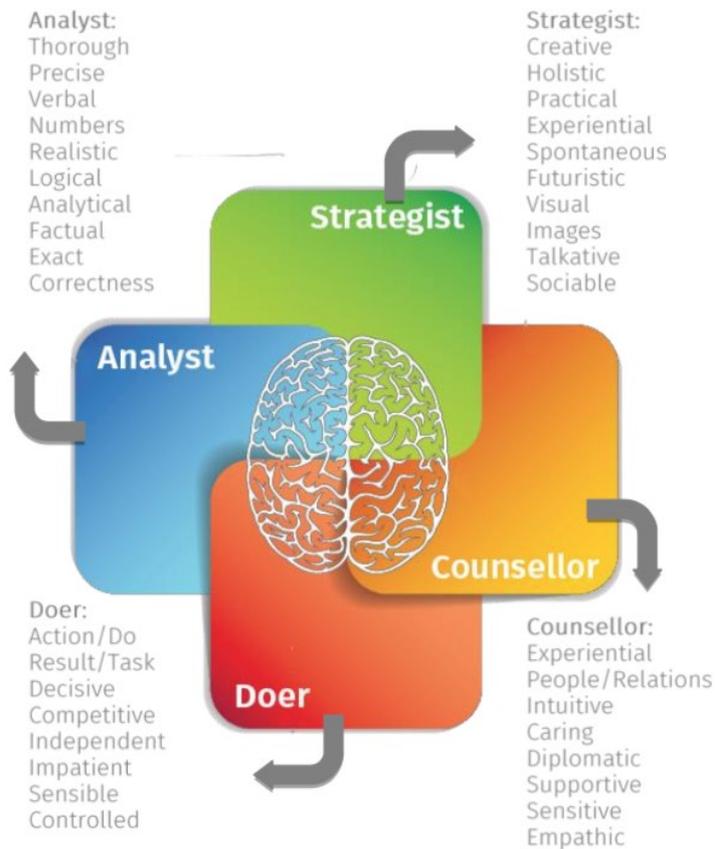


This preference indicates where a leader's analysis is likely to be focused, depending on their dominance. When someone is neuro-agile, they can balance expressive and receptive information processing and they can easily adapt the most appropriate way to deal with input in different situations.

Understand how a leader activates their 4 brain quadrants

Combining left/right and back/front lobe preferences, the brain is divided into four quadrants. Each of these quadrants is associated with a style of learning and thinking preference blend. Leaders who lead with the front-left brain are, figuratively speaking, **analysts**. Leaders who lead with the front-right are more **strategists**. Leaders who lead with back-right activate the **counsellor** quadrant. Leaders who prefer to use the back-left brain are described as activating the **doer** quadrant.

An **analyst** is an analytical thinker, who comes across as competent, detail-oriented, precise and diplomatic in relationships. They are dedicated to the quality of their work, however at times they can appear inflexible towards others' methods and pessimistic, to some extent.



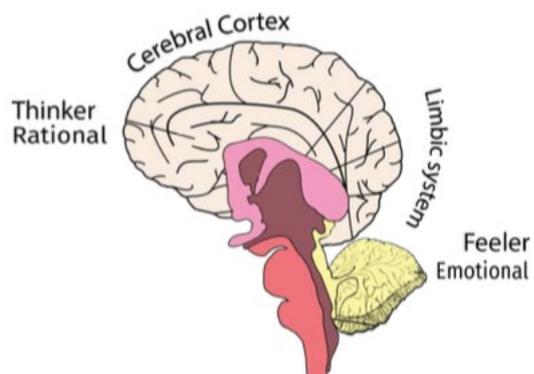
A **strategist** is someone who expresses dreams and possibilities, tends to be optimistic, people-oriented and an easy communicator. They make a good impression, they are friendly and outgoing leaders, but may lack the ability to execute on ideas and conclude tasks, as they tend to overestimate how much they can do in reality.

A **counsellor** is a guardian of relationships. These leaders are good listeners and make others around them feel safe and supported. At times, they can come across as indecisive, possessive and resistant to change.

The **doer** is a task-oriented leader tending to show a strong sense of perseverance. Doers are problem-solvers, hard-working leaders, who communicate in a direct and efficient way. Others may perceive them as insensitive because of this and they should be mindful when they make quick decisions or act impatiently.

Rational or emotional preference

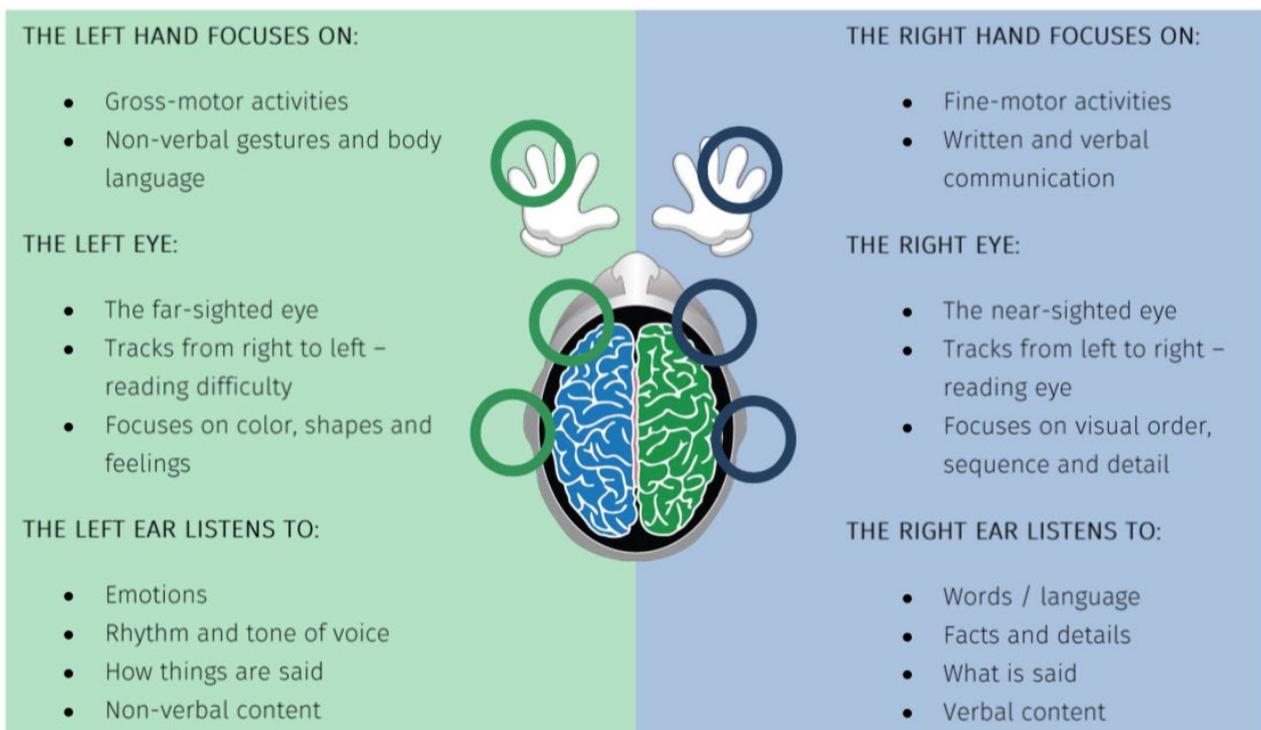
Neural pathways and electro-chemical activity are focused either in the cerebral cortex (the outer layer of the brain) or in the limbic system (a deeper area of the brain). When a leader thinks with their cerebral cortex, they tend to be more rational, processing information in a cognitive and creative way. Leaders who reflect using the limbic system, will process information on an emotional and practical level.



Some leaders will focus their processing in the outer part of their brain, making them more receptive to rational and logical information. Others will concentrate their thinking in deeper parts of the brain, which will make them more responsive to emotional and experiential cues. A neuro-agile brain, however, can simultaneously assimilate both types of information and focus on the most appropriate one in any situation.

Information processing style

In the same way as each hemisphere is responsible for processing information on a different level, each of our eyes, ears and hands are associated to a specific function.



Since we tend to have a preferred eye, ear and hand that leads our sensory experiences and our mental processes, depending on which of these is leading our cognition, we will experience and understand input in different ways and perspectives.

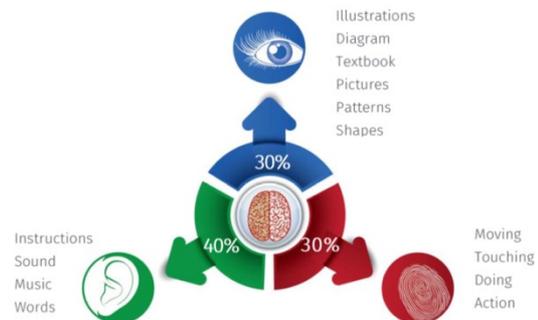
For example, the left ear listens for emotions and non-verbal content, therefore, if we are leading with it, we will follow a conversation paying attention to sound rhythms and tone of voice. Whereas if we listen more carefully with the right ear, we will capture the verbal content, the facts and details of the conversation.

Sensory preference

When thinking, learning and creating, the brain uses three languages: visual, kinaesthetic and auditory.

Visual learners prefer illustrations, pictures, diagrams, shapes and lines. When you think “visually”, you will observe details, colours, maps, perspectives, written words, charts, doodles and television. **Kinaesthetic** learners are about

learning through experience of movements, using skin, hands and muscles. They process information through feelings, movements, actions, texture, pressure, temperature, smell, spatial awareness. **Auditory** learners tend to use ears and mouth, processing stimuli through words and sounds. This mode of thinking allows us to interact in conversations, understanding tones of voice, jokes, sounds, messages, debates, speeches, lectures.



Intelligence preference

Leaders are smart in different ways and to different degrees depending on what type of intelligence they draw upon. A Neuro-agility brain profile assesses people on 11 types of intelligence, which include traditional intelligence, bodily intelligence, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence.

Traditional intelligence encompasses **logical** and mathematical thinking, **linguistic** intelligence and **visual** and spatial understanding. Bodily intelligence includes physical and **kinaesthetic** intelligence and **sensory** intelligence: the former is about hands-on learning, the latter about experiencing the world through the five physical senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and sound). Emotional intelligence is about understanding yourself and others (respectively, **intrapersonal** and **interpersonal** intelligences). Spiritual intelligence includes **creative** and innovative thinking, **naturalistic** comprehension, **musical** intelligence and **spiritual** awareness, which is about realising that you are part of a bigger picture.



TRADITIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Logical (mathematical)



Scientist - Steven Hawking

Linguistic (language)



Talk Show Host - Oprah Winfrey

Spatial (visual)



Designer - Leonardo da Vinci

BODILY INTELLIGENCE

Physical (kinesthetic)



Soccer Player - Cristiano Ronaldo

Sensory



Chef - Gordon Ramsay

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Intrapersonal (self)



Leader - Mahatma Gandhi

Interpersonal (people)



Leader - Nelson Mandela

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

Creative (innovative)



Entrepreneur - Sir Richard Branson

Naturalistic (nature)



Adventurer - Bear Grylls

Musical



Composer - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Spiritual



Philanthropist - Mother Teresa

Neurological potential

A leader's neurological design expresses their head potential. Potential can be increased by developing and exercising the flexibility of neural pathways. Becoming proficient at using both dominant and non-dominant functions simultaneously will increase the brain's capability, as leaders will process information on multiple levels at the same time, and consequently increasing receptiveness and learning effectiveness.

How to boost a leader's brain performance – 6 drivers:

To boost a leader's brain potential, challenge and support them to boost the six drivers that influence performance, to ensure that they are in a state of wellbeing and optimal learning. The next section I explains how the drivers affect leadership performance, stress and fatigue.

Brain fitness



When the brain functions homolaterally, it switches between left and right hemispheres, slowing down information processing. When the brain functions bilaterally, it uses both hemispheres simultaneously. Brain fitness is about functioning in bilateral mode, when all brain areas are accessible, receptive and responsive to absorb and respond to incoming and outgoing information. At optimum capacity, the brain is able to work at speed, with ease and flexibly, which are ideal conditions for learning, solving problems and thinking creatively.

Developing a leader's brain fitness skill set consists of a combination of physical cross-lateral exercises and mental activities that help produce neurotrophins and neurotransmitters, activate mental integrative states and promote cerebrospinal circulation daily.

The norm for brain fitness is 48% and ideally you would want leaders to be nearer 80% brain fit. Boosting brain fitness means encouraging leaders to use both their left and right brain hemispheres simultaneously. Whole brain utilisation is significantly improved by doing regular physical activities such as swimming, dancing, football, aerobics, tennis and exercise involving cross-lateral movements. Stretching at work, having meetings standing up and also stimulating both sides of their brain with mental activities, games, puzzles, music and humour makes a huge difference.

Most activities in life require bilateral (two sided) functioning as using both eyes and ears require us to be able to cross the midline. The picture below illustrates a bilateral movement.



Stress management and resilience



When stress levels are high, the brain releases cortisol hormones, which cause the neural connections to decrease or to be inhibited. This results in a leader's brain switching off communications between hemispheres and going in "auto-pilot" mode, where we exclusively use our dominant side, preventing slower access to the rest of our brain functions. Ensure leaders have stress coping skills that work for them.

Breathing and mindfulness are valuable, as is maintaining work-life-sleep balance, developing and maintaining optimistic mindsets in stressful times, having strong social bonds with others, exercising and moving sufficiently, self-debriefing stress management skills, practicing spirituality and so on. Pro-actively coping with stress, is not about doing one, or some, of these skills, but doing as many of them as possible, all the time.

Sleep



Sleep is essential for a leader's brain health, as it restores energies that increase performance and alertness. Lack of sleep is one of the primary causes of fatigue, as it prevents neurotransmitters to be produced to manage fatigue and to maintain health and wellness. Fatigue increases risk for human error, raises the chance of health problems and reduces concentration. When leaders sleep sufficiently (7-9 hours a night), they restore depleted resources, repair damaged cells and are more receptive for thinking, learning and remembering. Dreaming helps clear "brain clutter", improving learning, concentration

and remembering. Quality of sleep is just as important as quantity. Make sure leaders sleep in a dark and quiet room to help them get better quality sleep. Our brainwaves slow to alpha frequency as we rest, theta frequency is when we feel drowsy, then Delta waves when we sleep or are dreaming, which are critical for brain health. Ideally 5 hours of deep sleep helps our brains to thrive.

Movement



Everyone is aware that exercise helps brain performance, however most leaders don't move sufficiently during the day. Research shows that simple movements of the muscles stimulate dendritic growth, which means that the connections between brain cells are strengthened. The greater dendritic development, the more agile the

brain becomes, resulting in better learning, concentration and performance. Movement activates the whole brain, promoting circulation of oxygenated blood and production of neurotransmitters responsible for good feeling and health; stretching promotes focus and concentration.

Attitude



Attitude is the result of habitual thought. Since attitude impacts performance, performance is the sum of a leader's total thinking. Whether you think you can do it or whether you can't, you are right – said Henry Ford. Positive mindset results in positive performance, a negative mind produces negative performance. Positive thoughts produce chemicals that enhance our good feelings, whereas constant negative thoughts drain energy and weaken the immune system. Reinforcing habitual positive thinking significantly increases brain performance in thinking and learning.

Food



Lifestyle and nutrition have a direct impact on a leader's brain performance, they affect processing abilities, emotions, health and concentration. Plenty of water and a varied, brain-friendly diet are directly correlated with energy levels: a healthy mind must be nourished with a healthy body.



You are what you eat. Eating natural and healthy brain foods compliment working faster and smarter. Most of nature's produce, used in moderation, will be conducive for increased mental performance. Unfortunately, most of man's "quick fixes" and products like processed and fast foods are not always conducive to physical and mental performance and health in the medium

to long term. Make sure leaders eat a healthy, brain friendly diet, especially if they are on the go. The lifestyle they lead and the food they eat, have a direct influence on their ability to process information, emotions, health and concentration. Eating a varied diet rich in protein and Omega-3s, avoiding processed food and drinking plenty of fresh water, are all key to a healthy diet and better brain performance.

Find out how you can activate new agile leadership by contacting Full Potential Group

You can complete your own **Neuro-agility Profile** which provides you with invaluable insights to measure and track your performance, flexibility and agility.

We offer courses to become an **Accredited Neuro-Agility Practitioner**, helping people to activate more of their agility, profiling on an individual basis; in groups or teams and across an entire organisation.

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