

# Do you have a Strategic Agility Gap?

Here's a simple quiz to give you a high level idea of how your firm rates on our strategic agility scale. Have fun!

## Instructions:

Jot down the answer that fits most closely for each question. After you answer them, I'll help you "grade" your results.

## The quiz:

Record the letter that best characterizes your firm in response to the numbered statement.

1. Our firm uses a MBO (Management by Objectives) process for some rewards...
  - A. ...that are based on hitting annual numbers aligned with fiscal years
  - B. ...never
  - C. ...that are based on achieving goals evaluated in the timeframe most appropriate for the given objective
2. By mid fiscal year, we spend energy on understanding sales and spending forecasts for next year...
  - A. ...rarely or never, it's too early
  - B. ...sometimes, driven by events that cause us to re-plan
  - C. ...often, since we extend our business outlook into the following year as a matter of course
3. Our top leadership group operates like a team that is in sync...
  - A. ...rarely
  - B. ...occasionally, especially when there's a crisis
  - C. ...because they are a model team
4. Our experience with change initiatives is...
  - A. ...they don't work
  - B. ...mixed, taking longer to achieve results and extracting a higher toll on the organization than we plan
  - C. ...they are typically planned and executed in an effective and efficient manner
5. The people in the trenches...
  - A. ...are cynical and don't understand why things have to change
  - B. ...will eventually go along with changes because they are forced to
  - C. ...have considerable context about the business and help drive the changes that are needed
6. When it comes to the future...
  - A. ...many employees hope that it's more like the past
  - B. ...our employees resist the changes that are sometimes needed to be successful
  - C. ...our employees look forward to doing the different things that will enable success
7. Information travels from the top to the bottom...
  - A. ...largely when there is something essential that needs to be communicated
  - B. ...episodically depending on where you are in the organization
  - C. ...frequently and in many forms to help keep employees connected to success
8. Information travels from the bottom to the top...
  - A. ...when there is no choice because the sh\*t is hitting the fan
  - B. ...episodically where the right relationships have been established or metrics or processes dictate
  - C. ...in a consistent and timely way as a matter of habit
9. At any given time, the top priority for each individual...
  - A. ...is hard to figure out since there are so many competing priorities
  - B. ...is clear when dictated by management though often demands multitasking
  - C. ...is usually clear because of sufficient context and a norm of focusing on the most important
10. During the middle of our fiscal year, we can reprioritize a good portion of our resources...
  - A. ...only with great pain, energy and in reaction to a crisis
  - B. ...with a lot of time and energy to deal with a crisis or great opportunity
  - C. ...efficiently and effectively to take advantage of a better opportunity
11. When we don't have the internal capacity to take advantage of a good opportunity...
  - A. ...we squeeze it in anyway
  - B. ...we wait until next year's planning cycle to see if we can fit it in
  - C. ...we efficiently and effectively reprioritize and/or leverage partners to expand our capacity

12. For the most part, the employees in our organization...
  - A. ...fill predefined, detailed job descriptions and require plans to fill in the gaps in fully meeting the prescribed competencies
  - B. ...are in roles where they fill defined job descriptions which sometimes are modified by management based on the experience and talent strengths of the individual
  - C. ...influence how their roles are defined through their experiences and talent strengths as well as the evolution of business needs
13. Key customer facing business activities that cross functional organizations (like the sales order to order fulfillment process or new product development process) are:
  - A. ...ad hoc processes that just evolved on their own and work the way they work
  - B. ...optimized locally by the different functional organizations that participate
  - C. ...globally owned by someone you can point to and improved on regularly
14. Our strategic plan contains...
  - A. ...nothing strategic because we don't really look forward
  - B. ...has an annually updated prediction of the future and an accompanying detailed path plan to get there
  - C. ...a range of scenarios with assumptions and plans for a set of preferred futures that is updated quarterly
15. When looking at comparing investments whose benefits are short term versus those that are long term...
  - A. ...the decision criteria we use always favors incremental changes to more speculative investment choices
  - B. ...we invent data about long term benefit to level the playing field for comparison purposes
  - C. ...we strategically allocate investment dollars into different categories including set asides for the longer term and therefore only compare investments that compete in the same category with common criteria
16. When creating or updating corporate plans, the supporting information is...
  - A. ...very detailed "bottom's up" data figured out annually so we are sure that we make the right choices
  - B. ...detailed data that we already have supplemented by less detailed data proportional to what we know as we move further out
  - C. ...some data that we already had supplemented with predicted high level data based on causal analysis of our business which is updated quickly each quarter

**Scoring:**

For every "A" answer, give yourself 1 point.  
 For every "B" answer, give yourself 2 points.  
 For every "C" answer, give yourself 3 points.  
 Add up the total.

**Results:**

If you scored 23 or less you're likely at Level 1 - Ad Hoc Management Capability

Your firm is certainly 'agility challenged'. Even executing today's agenda has mixed results due to a lack of some prerequisite practices. Significant change is likely so difficult to achieve that it rarely succeeds due to both missing practices and a lack of a congruent management system.

If you scored 24-33 you're likely at Level 2 – Functional and Operational Management Capability

You've got some reasonable base management system practices and can execute much of today's agenda but you have few strategic agility characteristics. Change initiatives have likely been mostly unsuccessful and even when a desired result is achieved, it is quite traumatic.

If you scored 33-42 you're likely at Level 3 – Systemic Change Management Capability

You've got several strategic agility practices covered. You've probably seen some but not complete success in your change initiatives because your management system is not yet operating in a fully congruent way to support strategic agility. Even when change succeeds, there is noticeable trauma involved. There are still a number of strategic agility killers lurking.

If you scored 43-48 you're likely at Level 4 – Strategically Agile Management Capability

You've got much of a strategic agility management system in place. You've probably seen reasonable success in your change initiatives. Change when needed is almost an organizational habit, instead of a special initiative. There may still be a few strategic agility killers lurking to address.

**Suggestion:**

If you are at level 1, 2 or 3, think about investing some energy to get a better read on what may gate your management systems and find the leverage points to become more Strategically Agile. Ironically, often times Strategic Agility isn't an urgent capability to develop until you learn that you needed it. Then it's too late. On the other hand, in a dynamic environment, improving your Strategic Agility may be the difference between being a consistent winner and an 'also ran'.