



KORN/FERRY INTERNATIONAL



# THE MANY FACES OF LEARNING AGILITY

An excerpt from the 2010 Mid Winter Conference of  
Consulting Psychology in Scottsdale, AZ

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THE ART  SCIENCE OF TALENT

# Situational Leadership

## Historically

- Fiedler (1967)
- Vroom & Yetton (1973)
- Graen et al. (1982)

## Recently

- » McCall, Lombardo & Morrison (1988)
- » Brousseau et al. (2006)
- » Goldsmith & Reiter (2007)

# Learning Agility

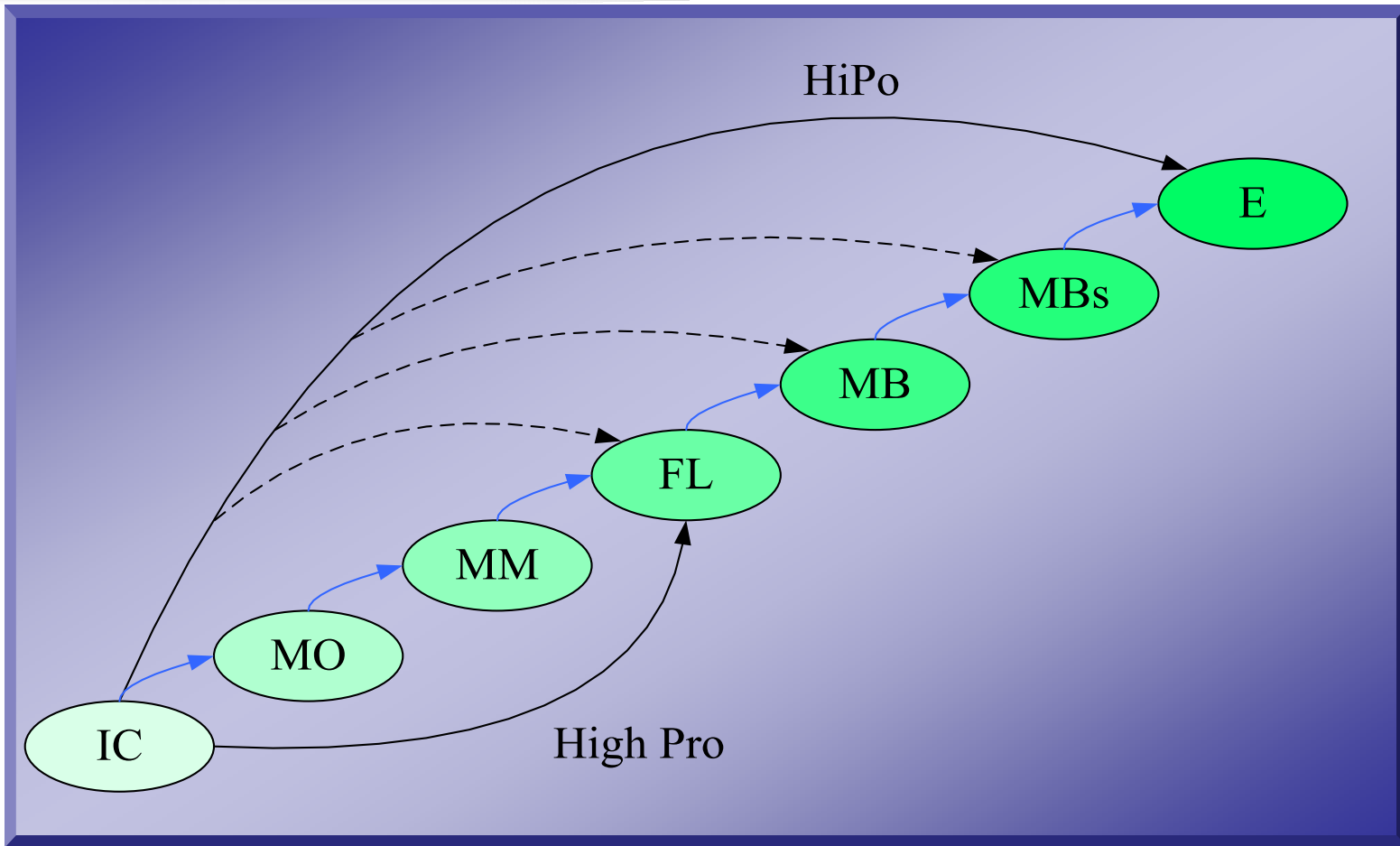
- **Definition**

*Ability and willingness to learn from experience, and then apply that learning to perform successfully under new situations.*

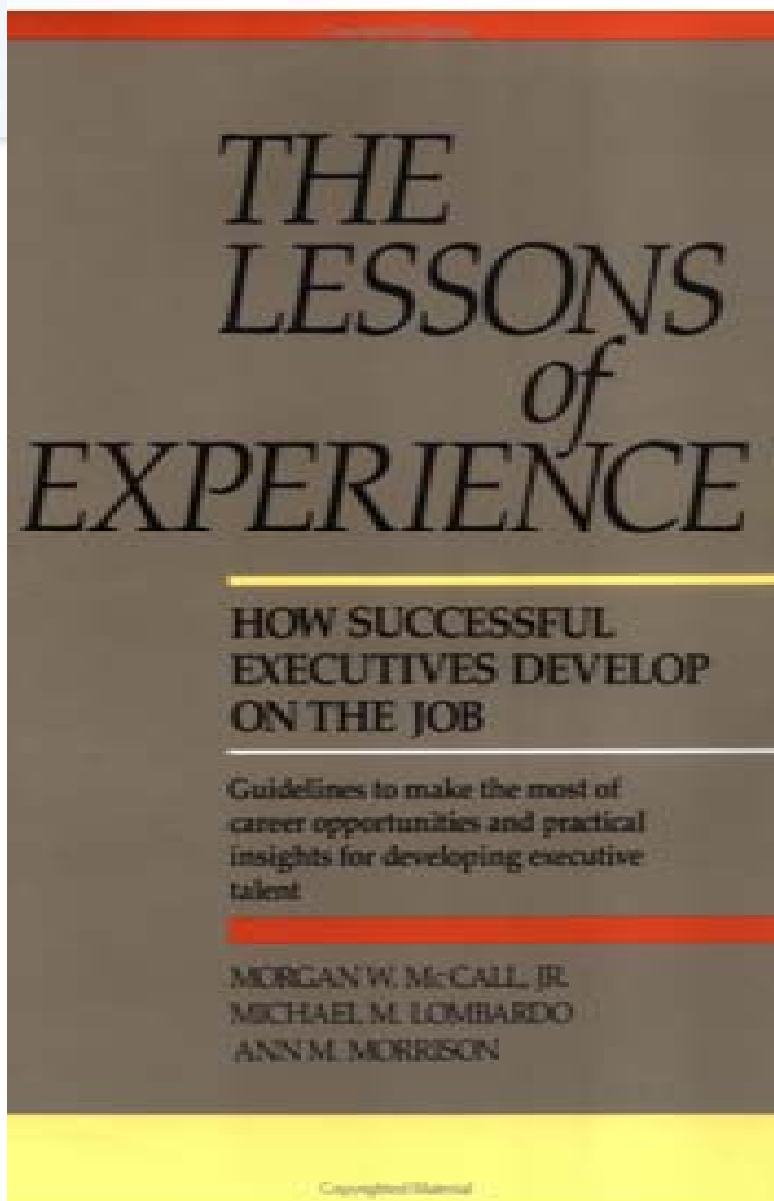
- **Focus – Vertical Leadership**

- **Identification and development of Hi-Po's**

# The Leadership Pipeline



Adapted from *The Leadership Pipeline* (Charan, Drotter, & Noel (2001))

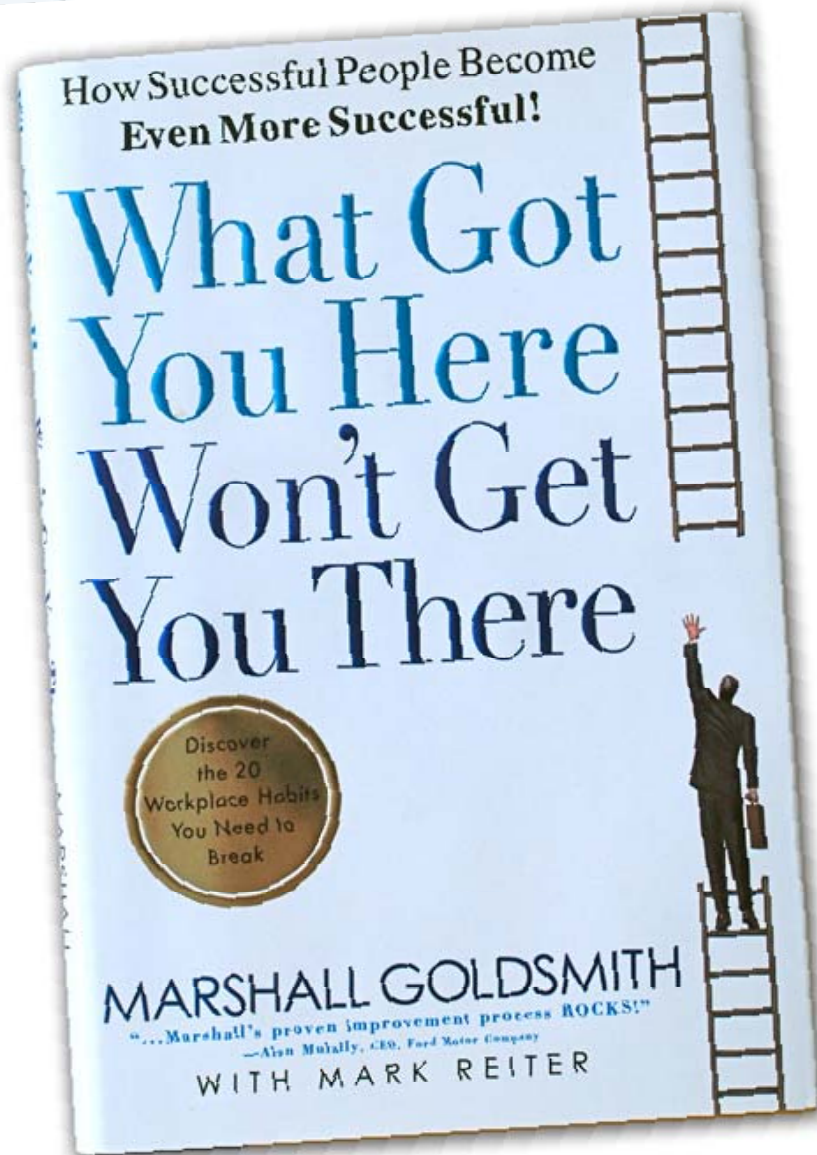


## Historical Roots

- People develop on the job
- Development depends on raw talent, the experiences one has, and what one does with them
- Some experiences are more developmental than others

***Glaring difference between successful people  
and those whose careers falter... is their  
ability to wrest meaning from experience  
(i.e., learning agility).***

*The Lessons of Experience*  
McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison (1988)



*Half the leaders I have met don't need to learn what to do. They need to learn what to stop.*

# Learning Agility

*Leaders create meaning out of events and relationships that devastate non-leaders... they look at the same events that unstring those less capable... and see something useful ... The signature skill of leaders is the ability to process new experiences... and to integrate them into their life.*

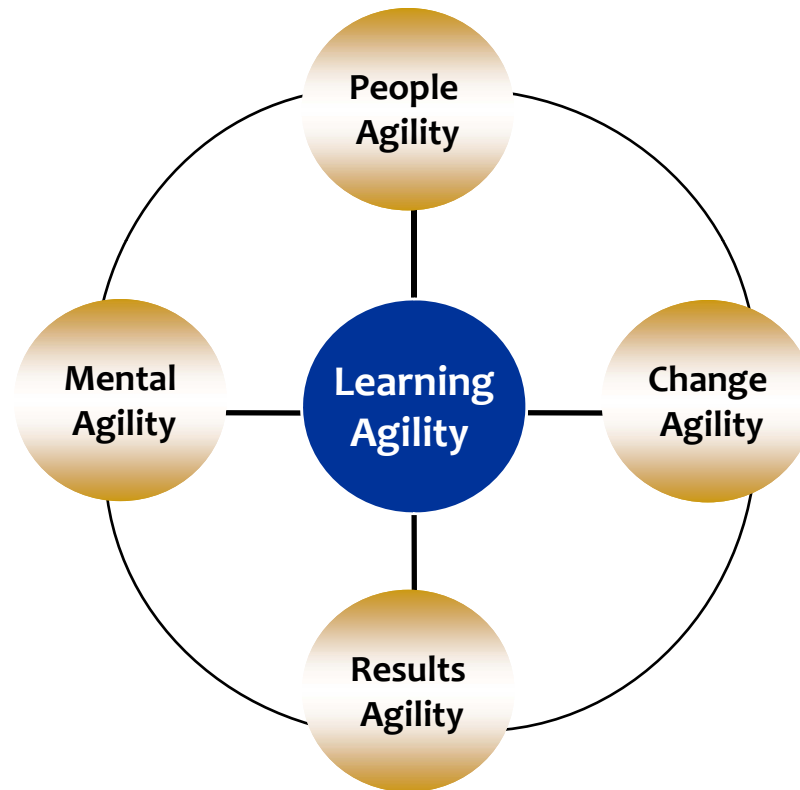
*Geeks and Geezers:  
Bennis & Thomas (2002)*



# Learning Agile People Do Four Things Well

1. They are ***critical thinkers*** who examine problems carefully and make fresh connections
2. They ***know themselves*** and are able to handle tough situations
3. They like to experiment and ***can deal with the discomfort of change***
4. They ***deliver results*** in first-time situations through team building and personal drive

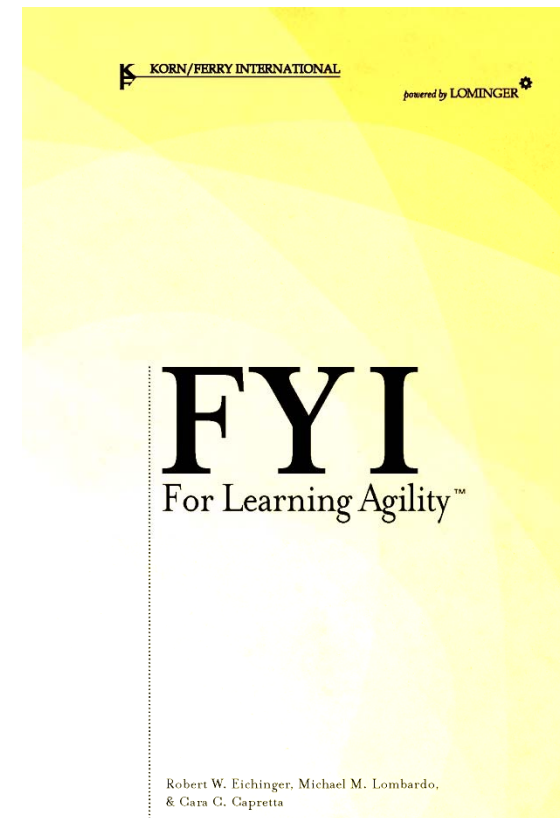
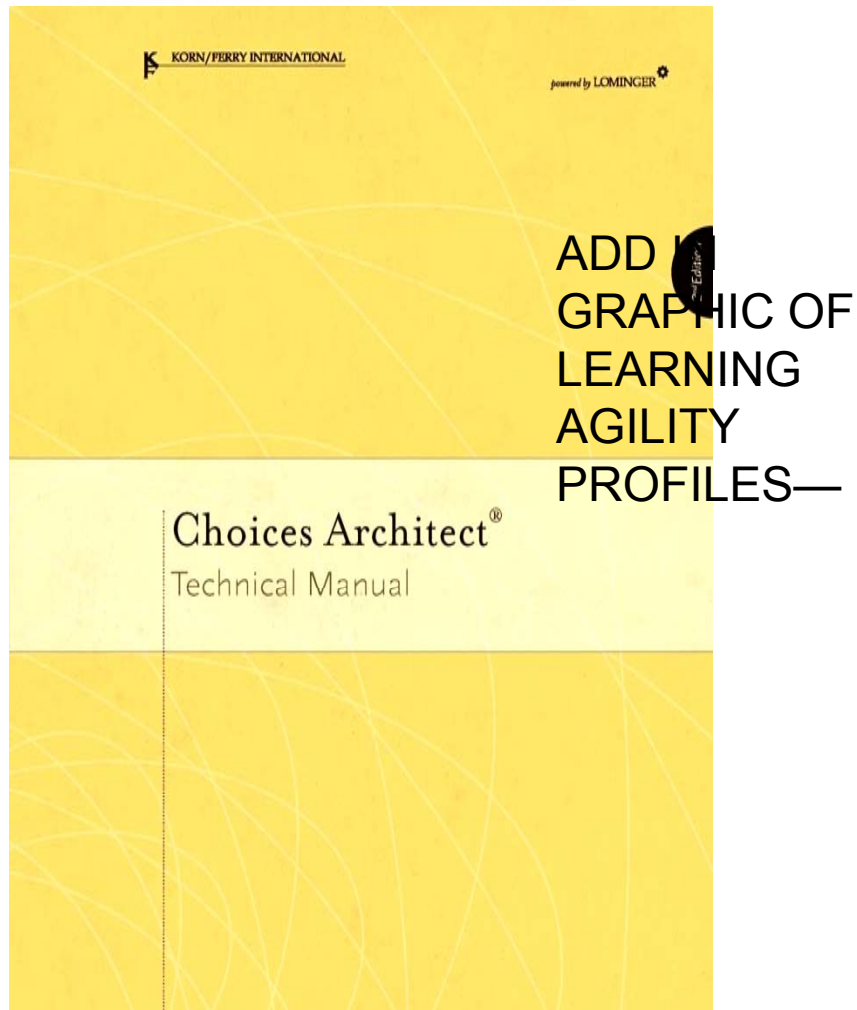
# Learning Agility: A Multi-Dimensional Concept



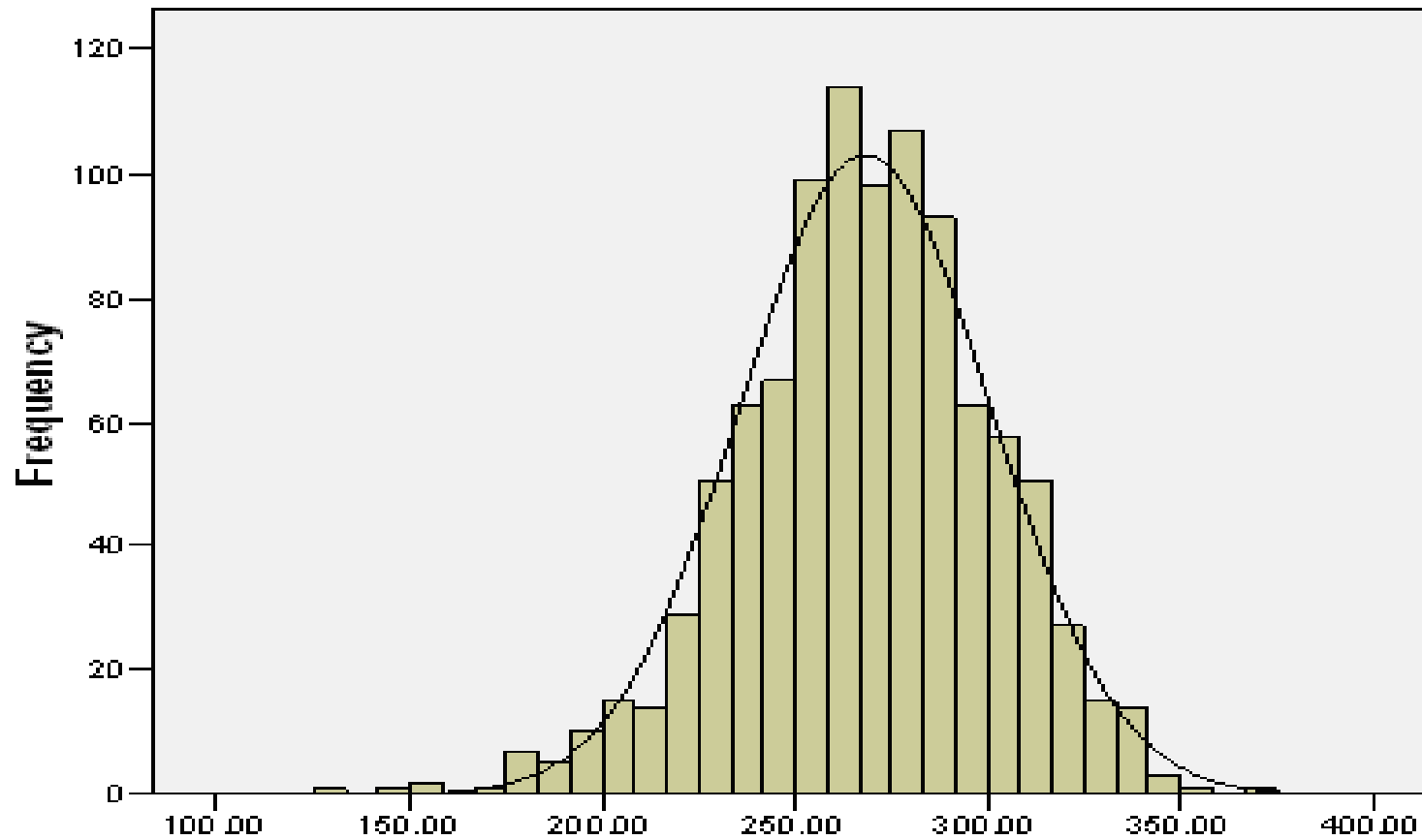
# Description of Mental Agility

- Curious
- Reads broadly and has wide interests
- Gets to root causes
- Comfortable with ambiguity and complexity
- Finds parallels and contrasts easily
- Questions conventional wisdom
- Finds solutions to tough problems

# Ways to find out more about learning agility



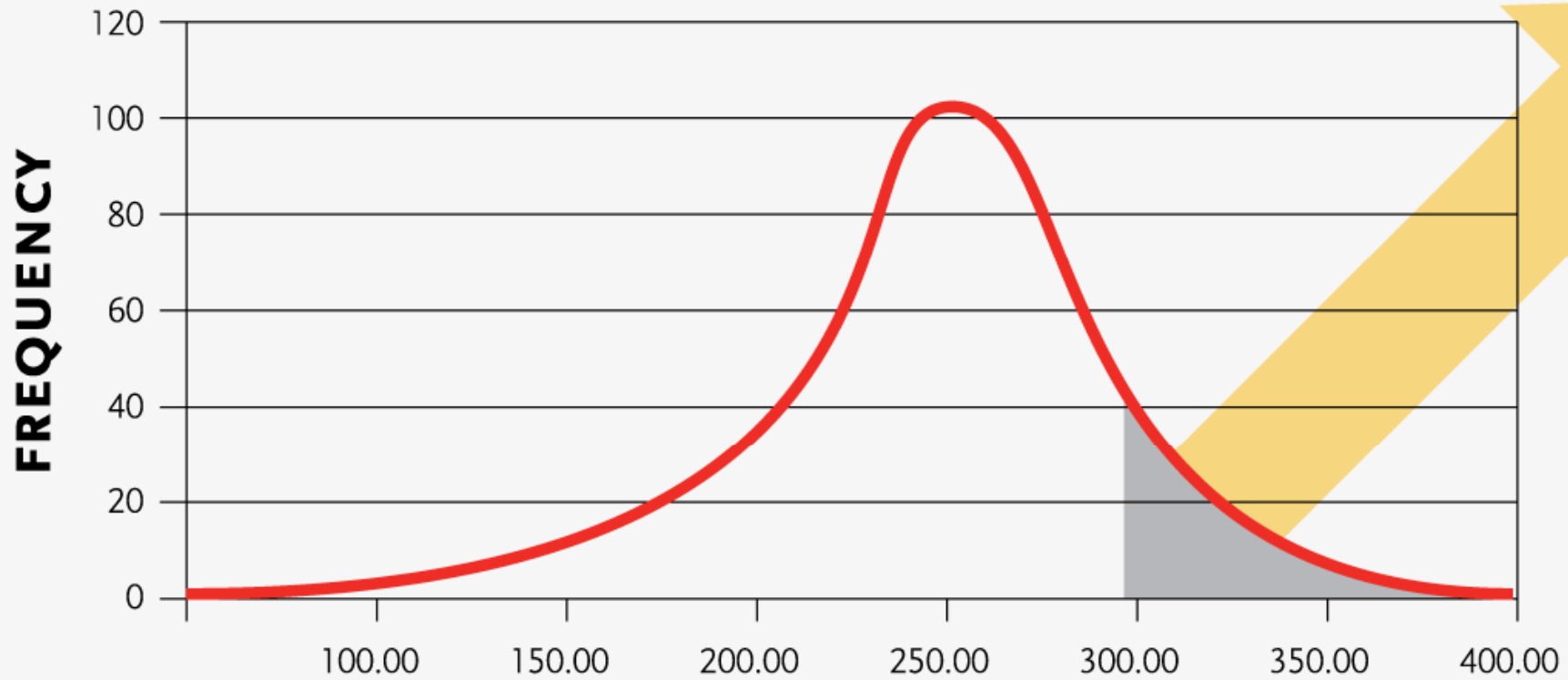
# Distribution of Learning Agility



# Are All Learning Agile Created Equal?

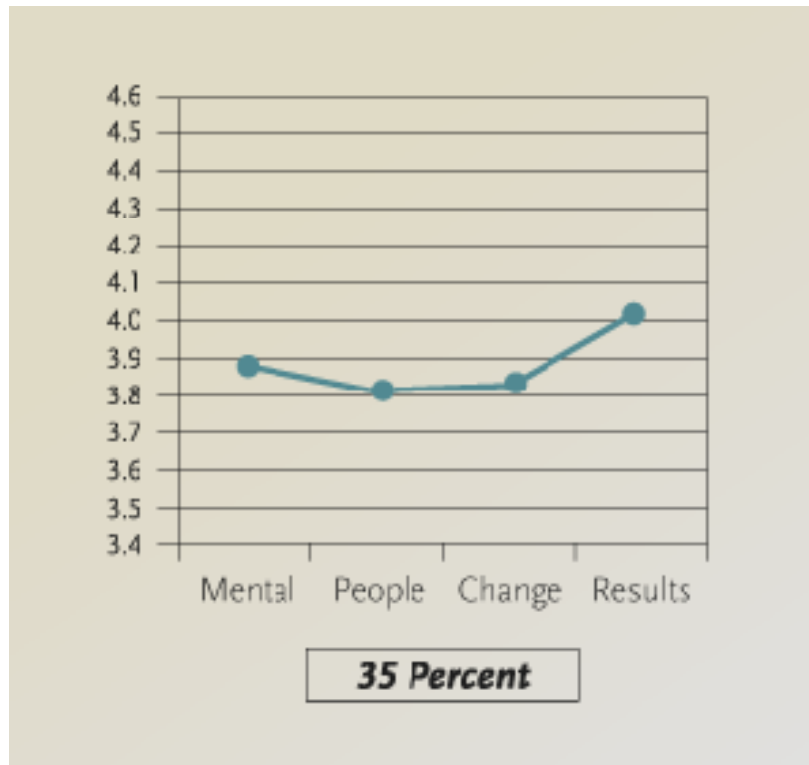
- Multi-dimensional construct
- High on one dimension – Low on another
- Profiles of high learning agile people
- Implications
  - Selection by profile
  - Develop by profile

# Learning Agility Distribution



# The Problem Solver

The Problem Solver is one of seven distinct types of learning agility...





# The Thought Leader

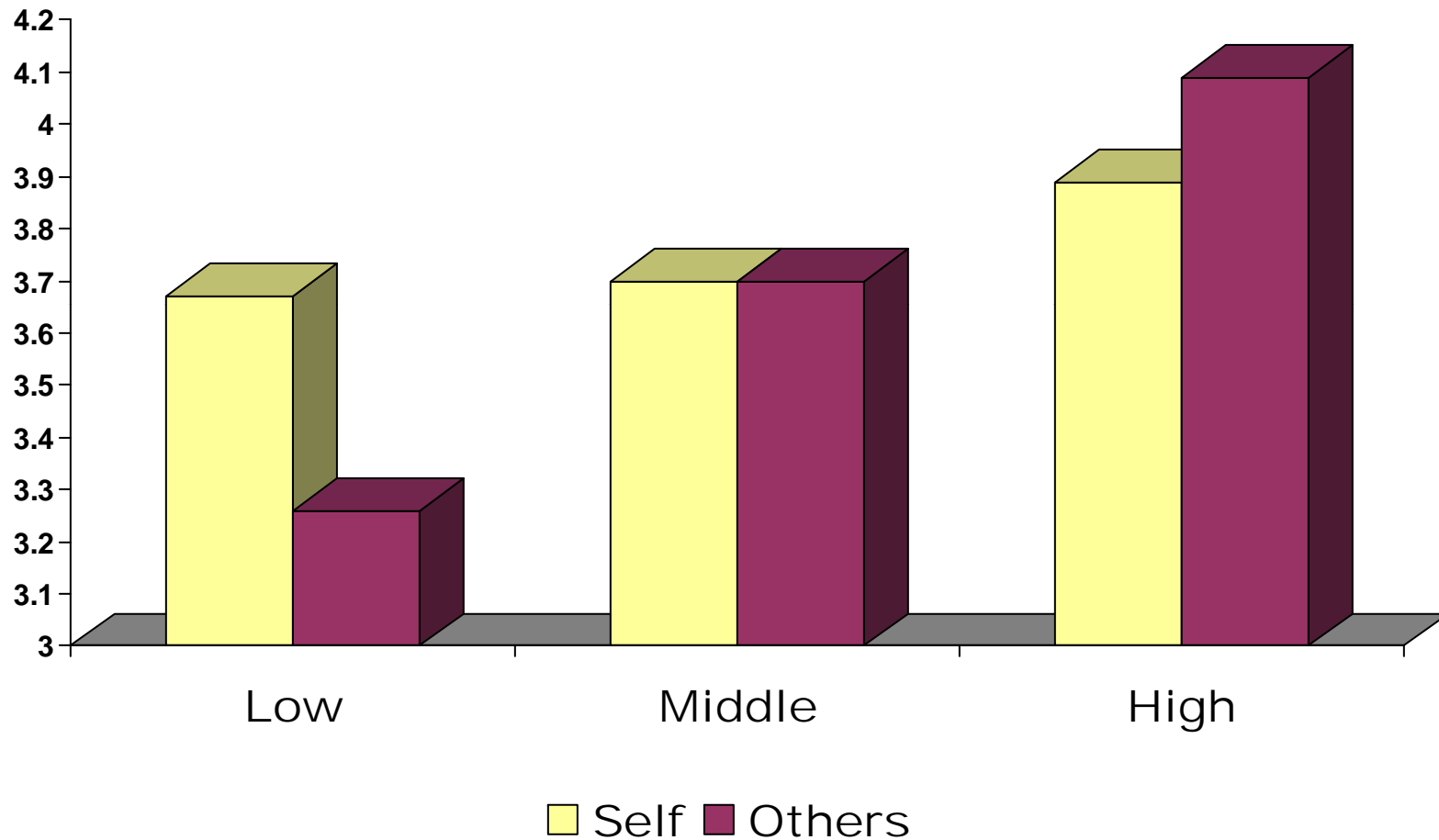
The Thought Leader is one of seven distinct types of learning agility...



# How do you identify high potential talent?



# Beware of the Self Report . . .





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