

Champion-Demonstrating Your Capabilities Through Your Character

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THE AGILE BUSINESS LEADER®



The ABL model is a performance model providing a bedrock of required skills and abilities for any leader who wants to positively impact success. An ABL involves functioning and performing within four roles.

These roles are:

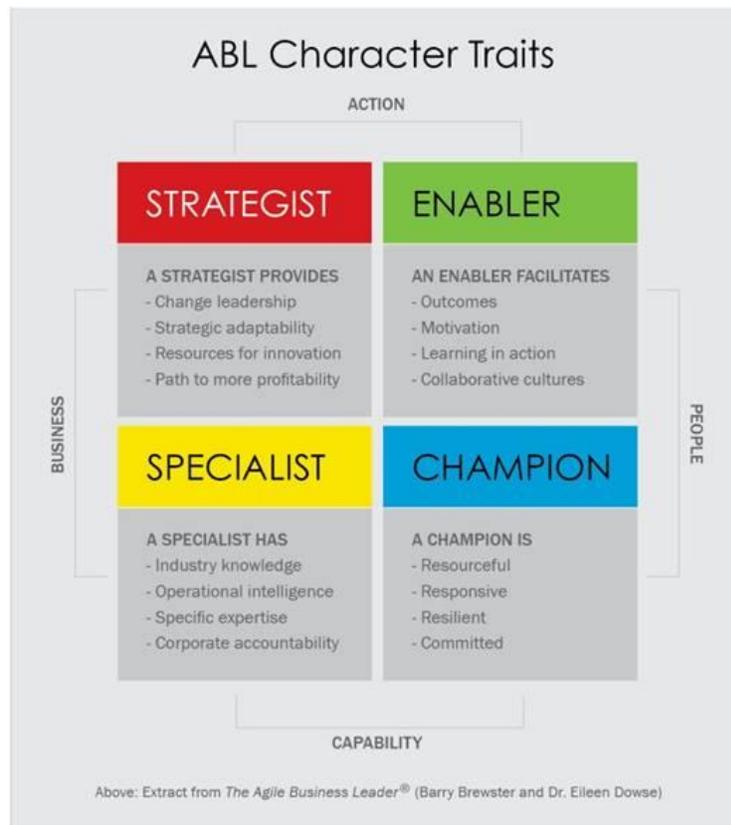
Enabler- Being able to leverage the knowledge and wisdom of everyone in the business.

Champion- Having the character and integrity to achieve and succeed.

Specialist- Possessing industrial intelligence and the means to continuously gather more.

Strategist- Creating a sustainable organization and pushing to embrace greater possibilities.

In short, an ABL is responsive, resilient, quick, flexible and extremely agile to meet the needs of customers and achieve outstanding results. To be an effective leader, a person must be able to perform a task with an appropriate level of interpersonal skills, professional knowledge, and operational ability to achieve the goal.



This article focuses on the ABL Champion role. The Champion responds to the realities of needing to be 'People' focused and at the same time needing to develop capability in themselves.. They are focused on helping the group dynamics of the organization by positively focusing on current and past strengths, successes and potentials and mobilizing and incorporating their own talents to make that happen.

The ABL Champion recognizes that speed and responsiveness have become even more important for business survival. Getting people excited about performing quality work, staying committed to the cause and moving forward for profitability are major components for success.

Champions are authentic and showcase their excitement about new ideas and change. Champions personify corporate values and characterize the strength of the organization. They have the courage to stand up for what they believe and have a strong orientation toward achievement. They have high expectations for themselves and others and always push to excel.

Championship is a leadership component that is all but forgotten by modern standards. Traditionally corporations value leaders who are rational, strategic thinkers and who developed systems. This old way of thinking valued people who 'ran' the organization. Today organizations need Champions who continually 'create' the organization as it responds to ever changing business demands.

As a Champion, the ABL sees his role as a "people systems architect" who makes decisive contributions to the critical tasks of; building value, creating cultures of accountability and establishing practices to recruit, retain, develop, and motivate people. These Champions present themselves to the world as confident, adaptable, responsive and perseverant people. They have an intense work ethic, are disciplined and unruffled by provocations. They are dynamic ambassadors who consistently maintain integrity, overcome resistance and promote a unity of purpose. They assume strategic responsibilities and can easily identify their contribution with the growth of the business. The ABL Champion can work cross functionality influencing, inspiring and leveraging the strengths of the organization and its people. They have the courage to try out new approaches and are prepared to do what no one else does. Champions are worth watching and emulating.

It our belief that Champions are heroes who do extraordinary acts under difficult circumstances. They know what is expected of them and feel free to be innovative in whatever way they can to get the job done. They are the people who have both skill and will to do the right thing at the right time in the right way and for the right reason. In a way, the Champion could be considered a global currency for business because the capabilities possessed in this area are valued around the world.

The case for becoming a Champion seems simple, since speed in anticipating and responding to customer demands and quality in delivering results continues to be an important ingredient of competitive advantage. The ABL Champion has the passion to strive and surpass her personal best because she is relentless and consistent.

Four traits make up the role of the ABL Champion:

- Resourceful
- Responsive
- Resilient
- Committed

Here is a brief outline of each of these four important traits

1. Resourceful

The French writer Francois duc de La Rochefoucauld wrote *“Supreme resourcefulness consists in knowing the value of things.”* Being resourceful is different than using your resources. Being resourceful is all about being able to make the most of a situation with the amenities you have at hand. Resourcefulness incorporates; perspective, innovation and the ability to create solutions in a way that might be different from the usual.

Most people don’t see the world as it is, they see it as they are. The resourceful Champion sees the big picture. Being resourceful involves:

- Suspending judgment and having healthy skepticism.
- Thinking of outrageous (and practical) possibilities for creating workable solutions (in some cases for their own survival).
- Experimenting with different perspectives when assessing the situation and resolving issues.
- Going against conventional wisdom and societal norms, when addressing challenges.
- Taking stock of what he has available, and applying it towards the solution.

The Champion thinks outside the accepted limitations of an issue and focuses on innovation and adaptability as he constantly challenges the status quo. He incorporates his innovative ability to recover or adjust easily to misfortune or change and not get bogged down by existing restrictions. He is able to quickly bounce back from disruptions. By considering innovation as a strategic issue requiring a systemic approach, he has an attitude of openness, as he facilitates solutions to existing services, products, and markets. The Champion knows that without action there is no innovation and asks the question, “What other areas have we not yet considered for creating a solution to the issue”?

2. Responsive

The English Naturalist, Charles Darwin said *“It’s not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change”.* Being responsive means acknowledging and understanding the needs and priorities of another person, whether or not they are a client, vendor or someone working within the organization. The Champion who is responsive is prepared for uncertainty and unplanned events in the current ‘on demand’ business operating environment. It was known that Mohandas Gandhi often changed his mind publicly. An aide once asked him how he could so freely contradict this week what he had said just last week. The great man replied that it was ‘because this week he knew better’. Responsive leaders

often adapt to evolving environments by changing their positioning and their way of doing things. They strive to constantly stay abreast of the altering needs of people and situations. They are flexible, fluid and free. Responsive leaders have the ability to identify needs and priorities and act upon them in a direct and consistent manner. They are respected, trusted and perceived as reliable and extremely useful by those in the higher levels of the hierarchy. The Champion recognizes he must be very responsive, reliable, and agile enough to satisfy customers' unique and changing needs.

3. Resilient

Champions expect a great deal from themselves and others. They set high and higher expectations and work hard to achieve them. They stay committed to analyzing the effects of their own and others' action and continuously explore and experiment ways to improve. Champions enlist the support and assistance of all those who must make the project work (peers, managers, customers, clients, suppliers, and citizens). They know that those who are expected to produce the results must feel a sense of ownership. They form relationships founded on trust and confidence. They are willing to take risks, to innovate and experiment in order to find new and better ways of doing things. They challenge the system in order to get new products, processes, services and systems adopted. Champions accept mistakes and disappointments as learning opportunities.

4. Committed

There is substantial research that supports the claim that organizations with more committed employees outperform others in sales and financial performance. The reason, employees were more satisfied, empowered productive and active in serving customers. Commitment to the organization has never been of greater significance or more threatened. We have seen businesses across the world suffer from continual corporate downsizing, large-scale bankruptcies and acquisitions that have eliminated long-standing companies. The old psychological contract between employers and employees - where employers provide job security and predictable advancement to employees in exchange for the loyalty and performance has been dammed beyond repair. Organizational commitment is also being challenged by the tendency of knowledge workers to be more attached to their profession than to their organization. This means that organizational commitment must be generated in other ways. Commitment differs from job satisfaction. Commitment is about attachment to the organization itself, including its goals and values. When commitment exists, the individual believes in and accepts the organizations' goals and values. They are willing to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and want to maintain membership in it. Albert Einstein put it best when he said, "Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it." That lifelong attempt requires commitment. Leaders don't become leaders through talent alone. No matter how intellectually skilled, emotionally gifted or economically advantaged they are. No one is prepared for all the uncertainty and newness an organization can throw at them. Leaders must adapt and learn to fulfil what is expected of them and what they expect of themselves. They must be committed to achieve.

The Champion is a person who has an abundant reserve of self-confidence, stamina, and innovation. By promoting the development of Agile Business Leaders, we are calling for a shift that requires an increased level of adaptability and flexibility in business operations. We are challenging organizations to find ways to support Agile Business Leaders and address doing business in this globally connected, hyper-active environment.

This article encourages you to recognize, that when you change the way you look at things, you change the way things look. We challenge you to develop the skills of the Agile Business Leader.