

# Developing Adaptive Performers

## supportive leadership strategies in the context of change

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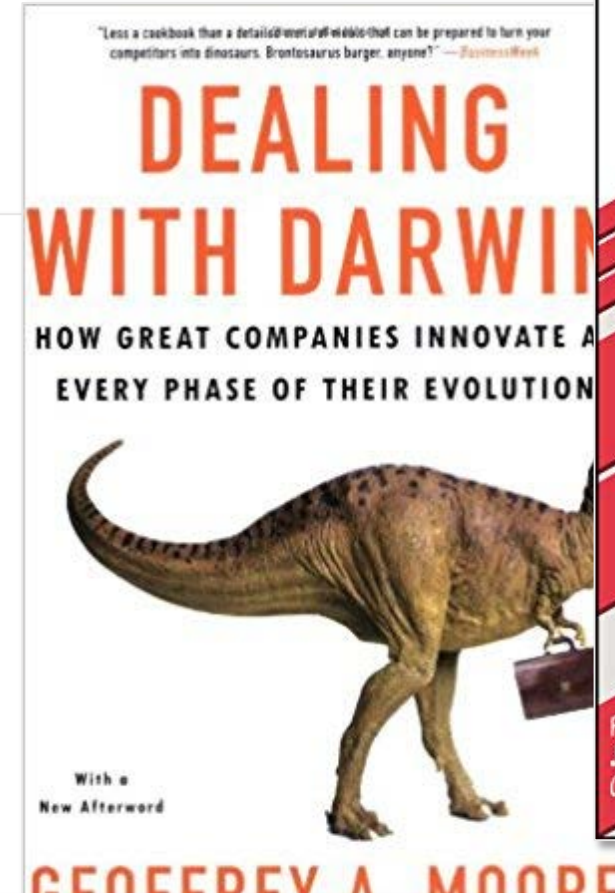
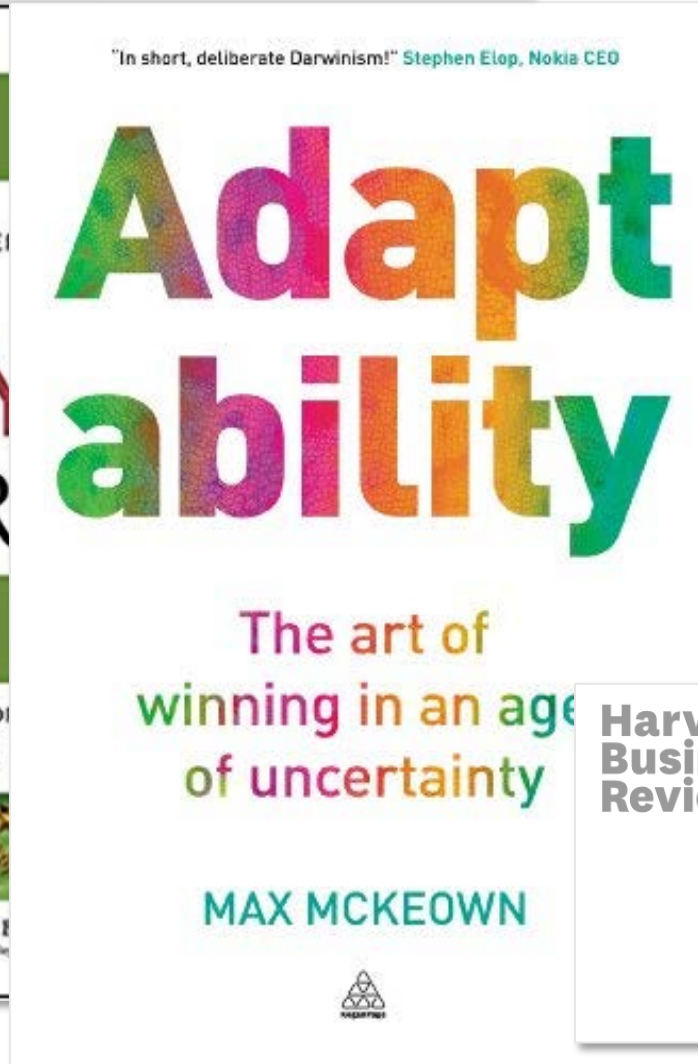
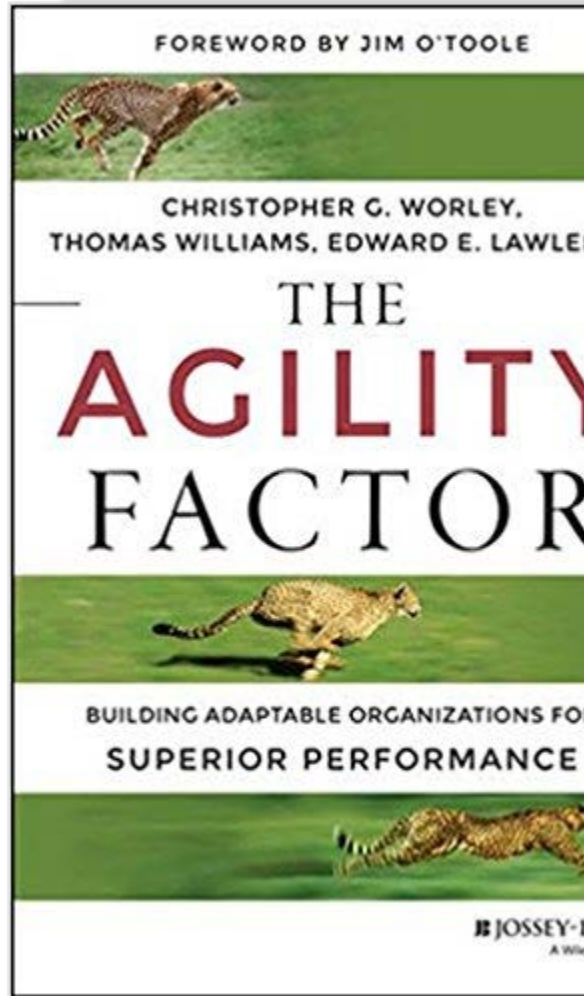




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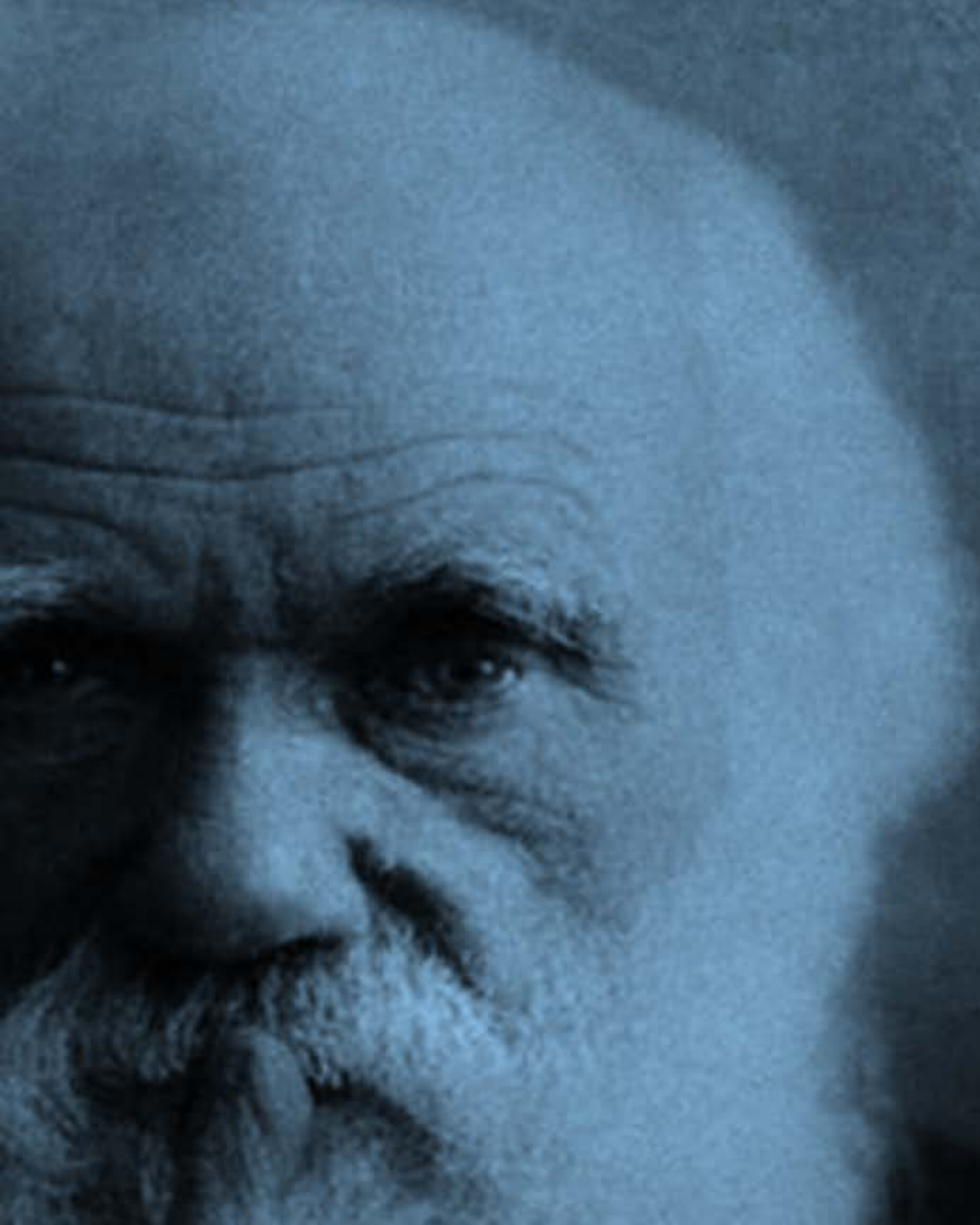
Harvard  
Business  
Review

MANAGING UNCERTAINTY

# Adaptability: The New Competitive Advantage

by Martin Reeves and Mike Deimler

FROM THE JULY-AUGUST 2011 ISSUE



“It is not the  
strongest of the  
species that  
survives, nor the  
most intelligent,  
but the one most  
responsive to  
*change.*”

~Charles Darwin, 1809

# The organization of the future: *agile, innovative, adaptive*

Workplaces today are characterized by high volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA environments), which is exponentially enhanced by the increasing application of digital technologies (Fourth Industrial Revolution)

Which sector do  
you think is most  
likely to benefit from  
the Fourth Industrial  
Revolution?



Healthcare

45%



Education

11%



Finance

15%



Infrastructure

14%



Energy

15%

# The organization of the future: *agile, innovative, adaptive*

- One of the biggest **challenges facing leaders** is the need to enable organizational adaptability, despite change-obstructing structures and people
- One of the biggest **challenges facing employees** is the need to cope with changing work environments and adapt to changing job demands, while at the same time delivering on prescribed performance indicators

# Adaptive Performance

- The behaviors individuals enact in response to, or anticipation of, externally-initiated, work related changes
- Aimed at maintaining performance levels or minimizing performance discrepancies that result from these changes.

Jundt, Shoss & Huang, 2015

**How can leaders enable “change-resistant” employees to perform more adaptively in response to changing work demands?**

- We experience dynamic instability in our work tasks and workload brought about by rapid change
- Problems and changes emerge in our personal space and require immediate attention
- Demands often exceed the available resources we need to deal with them
- We often have little influence in or control over the changes occurring (externally-initiated)

**Volatile**

- We lack clarity, or confidence, about what work situations/problems we face and how to handle them, because work situations/problems are increasingly novel
- Information processing and decision making is more difficult because we can't rely on mental models
- Increasing uncertainty regarding what the future holds for us at work, or if there is a future for us

**Uncertain**

**Ambiguous**

- Situations can be understood in more than one way, or can lead to more than one outcome, making it difficult to identify threats and opportunities, and what outcomes are "successful"
- What is expected of us or what we need to do to achieve expectations is largely unspecified or often unclear (role ambiguity)

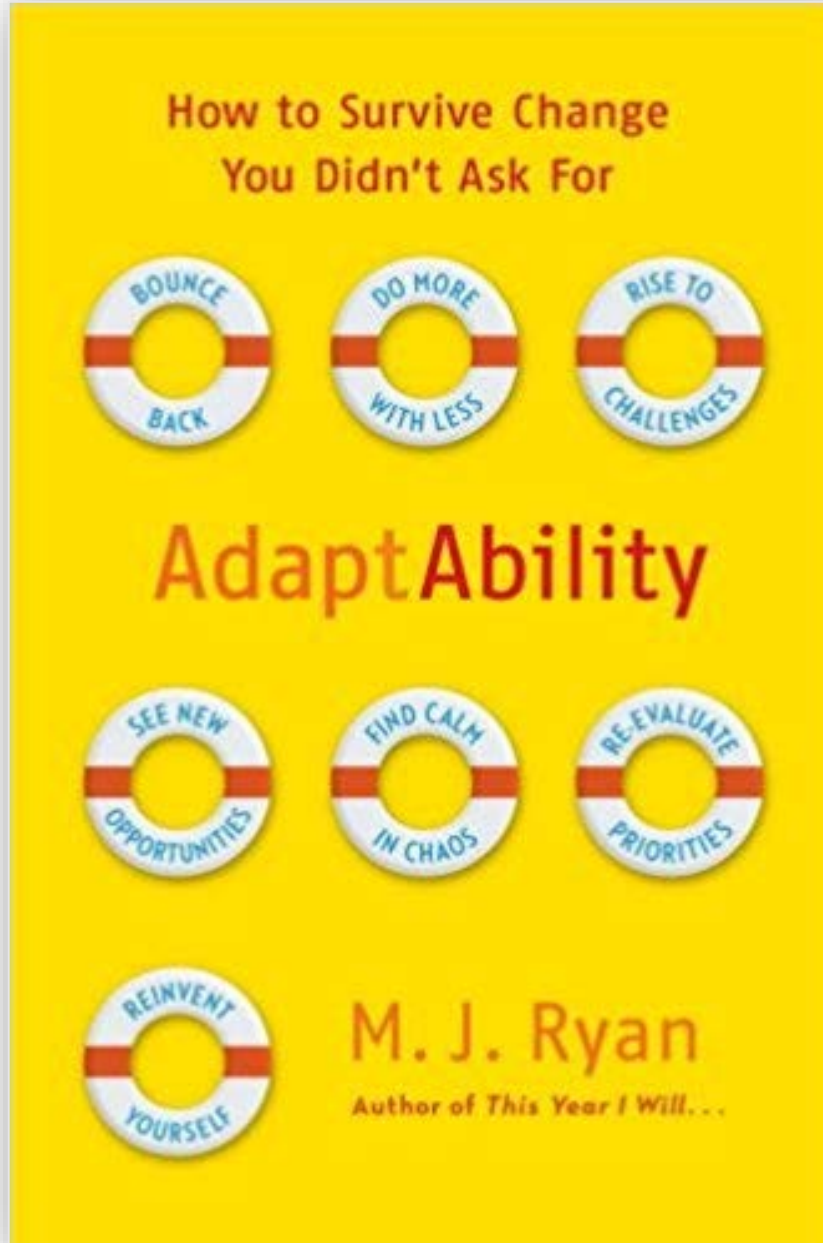
**Complex**

- The number of elements task work is composed of and the relationships between elements is high
- Task work increasingly shared between team members assigned to interdependent tasks
- Makes causal inferences difficult, and personal performance dependent on the performance of others

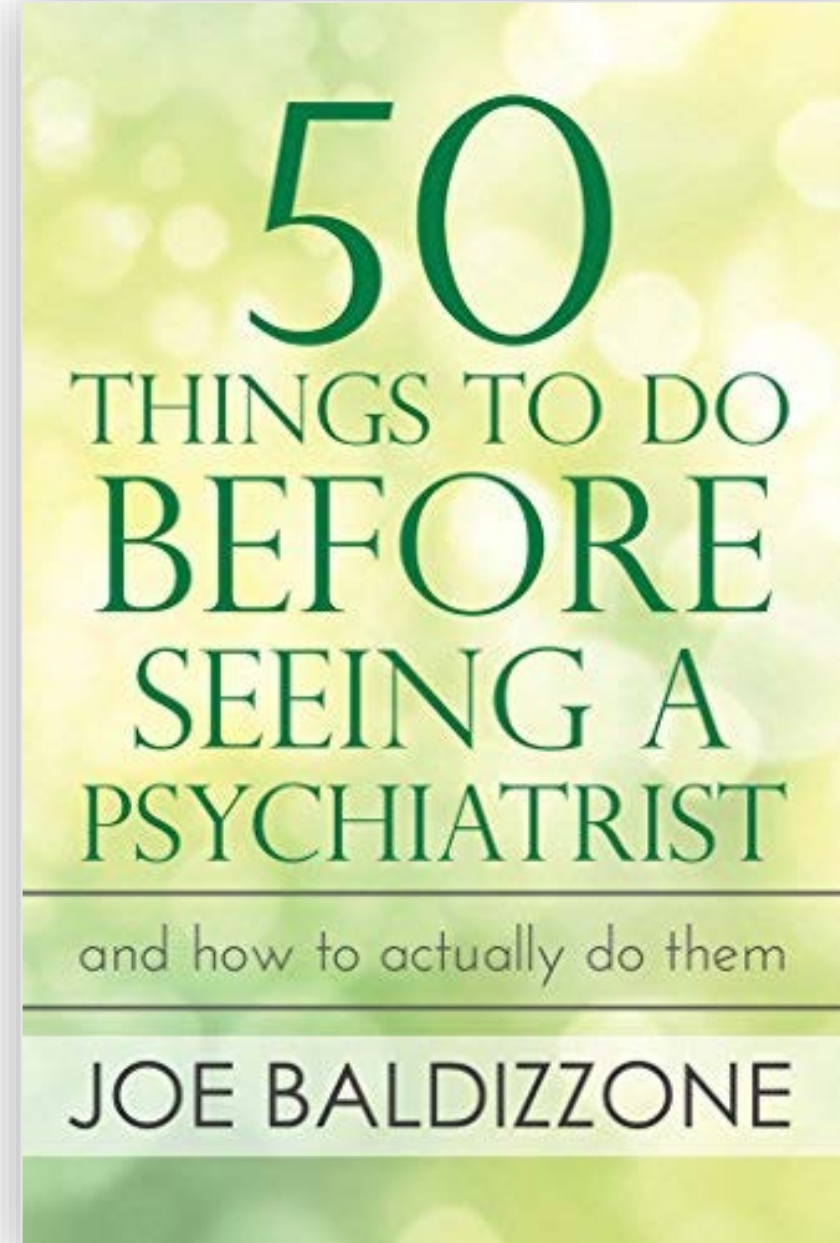
**Hindrance job stressors: Stimulus at work that create excessive job strain because they threaten our ability to perform effectively.**



Amazon customers who bought:



Also bought:



**SELECT**

**DEVELOP**

# Developmental Leadership

Supervisory behaviors aimed at recognizing an employee's developmental needs and goals, and providing the support (e.g., feedback, coaching, learning opportunities, recognition) needed to meet – and exceed – them

Rafferty & Griffin, 2006

# Developmental Leaders

- Take the time to learn about each employee's desires for further development
- Give employees the support and encouragement needed to meet these personal goals and ambitions
- Provide helpful performance feedback and the advice and support needed to improve
- Provide challenges at work that help develop and strengthen employees' skills
- Make sure employees get credit when they do something that is good

# Transformational leadership

*To transform: to making a change in the form or nature of something*

## Inspirational motivation

- *Setting a compelling vision of a **changed** future state*

## Idealized influence

- *Serving as the organization's #1 **change** agent*

## Intellectual stimulation

- *Encouraging employees to initiate productive **change***

## Individualized consideration

- *Preparing employees to perform in **changing** work situations*

# Developmental Leadership – Adaptive Performance

Helps employees acquire or improve the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to adapt to changing work environments

Enhances employees' confidence in their abilities to deal with a broad range of work issues, which increases feelings of control over changing work situations

Increases employees intrinsic motivation, which in turn increases their willingness to accommodate future changes at work

Produces the learning orientation needed to engage in more productive coping behavior when faced with changes at work

**Who benefits most from  
developmental leadership?**

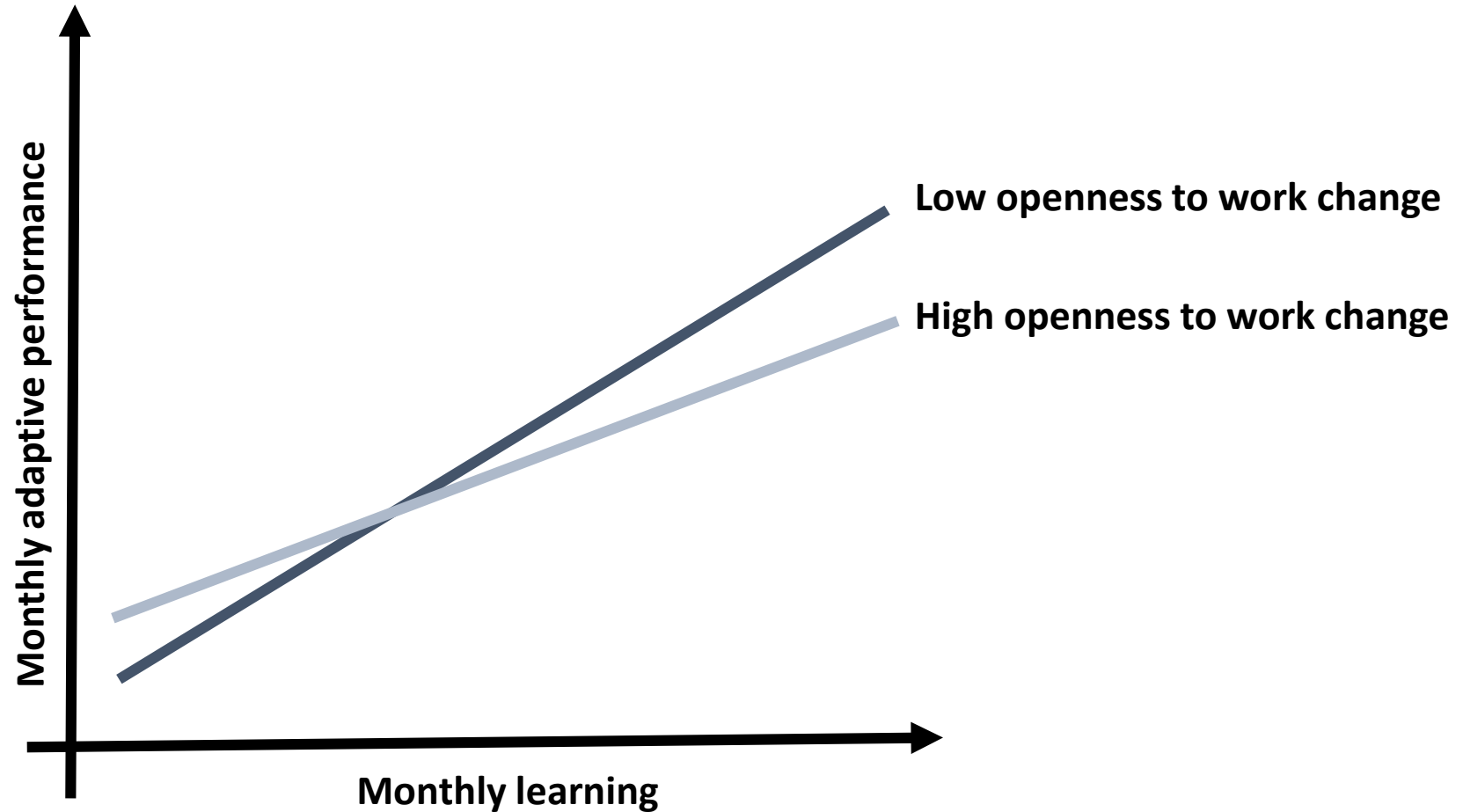
# Employees Less Open to Change

- Generally more skeptical/ resistant to changing tasks and roles
- Less likely to have experience with change

# Employees Less Resilient to Challenge

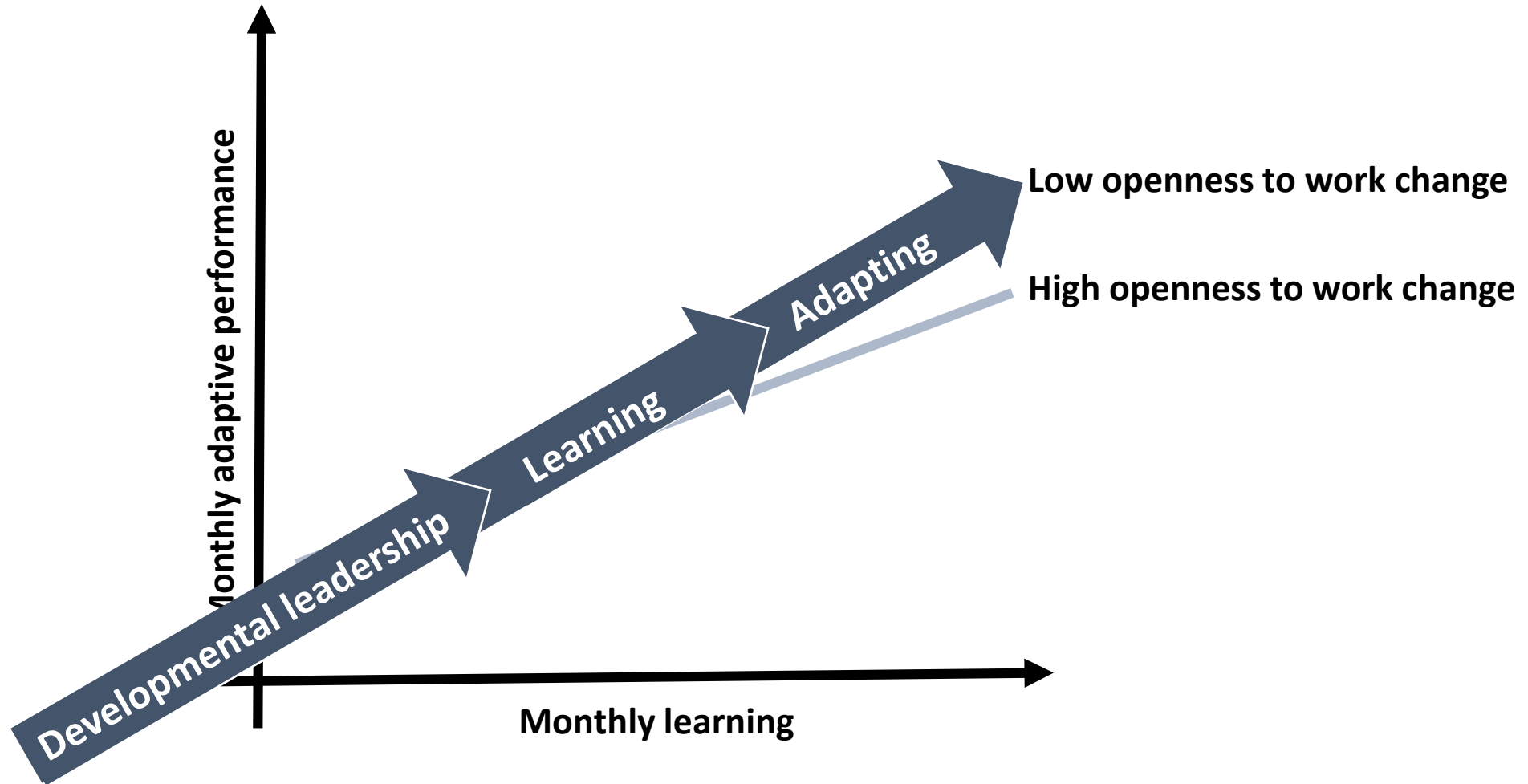
- Do not actively seek out new challenges at work
- Less able to withstand, or cope with, difficult conditions

# Less Open to Work Change



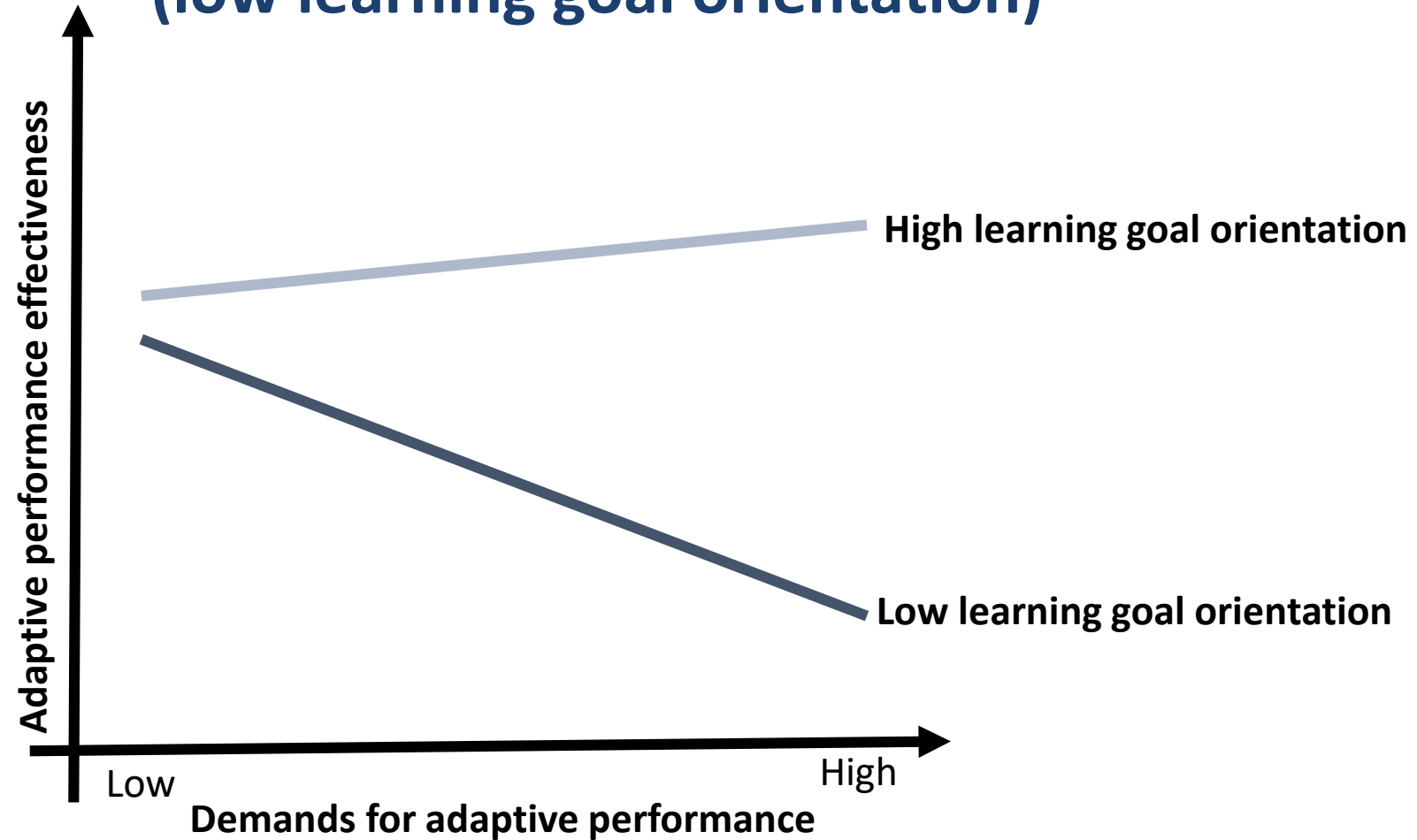
*Elizabeth Solberg: Adapting To Changing Job Demands: A Broadcast Approach to Understanding Self-Regulated Adaptive Performance and Cultivating It in Situated Work Settings. Series of Dissertation - 05/2017. Handelshøyskolen BI. 2017.*

# Less Open to Work Change

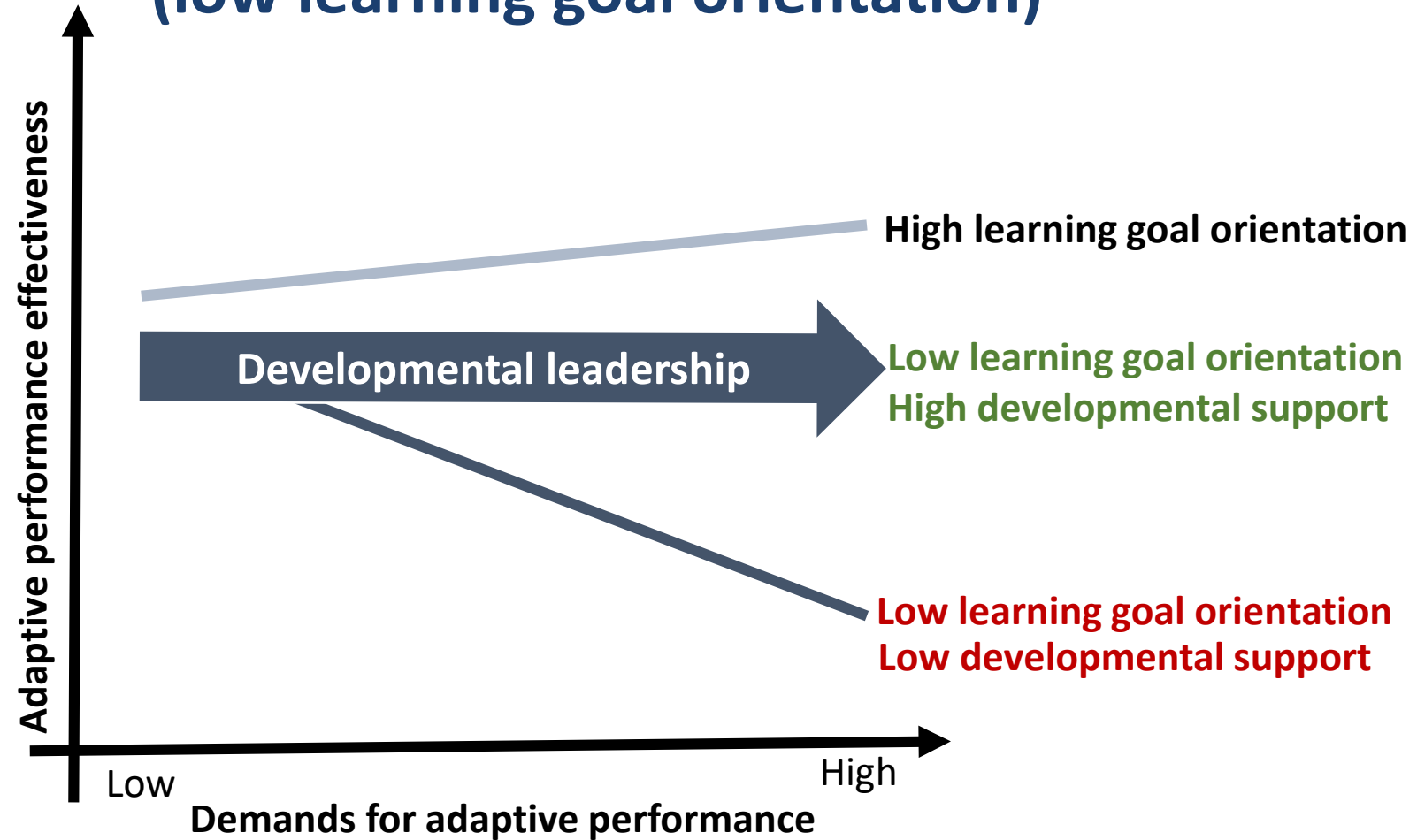


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# Less Open to Work Challenges (low learning goal orientation)



# Less Open to Work Challenges (low learning goal orientation)



**Some employees will experience greater challenges in changing work situations.**

**These employees will benefit more from receiving developmental leadership.**

## **Developing adaptive performers - what's needed**

- 1.** Empathy for the complexity and challenge employees face in dealing with changing work situations
- 2.** Felt responsibility for enabling employees to perform well in changing work environments
- 3.** Developmental leaders

# Displaying Developmental Leadership

- Taking the time to learn about each employee's desires for further development
- Giving employees the support and encouragement needed to meet these personal goals and ambitions
- Providing helpful performance feedback and the advice and support needed to improve
- Providing challenges at work that help develop and strengthen employees' skills
- Making sure employees get credit when they do something that is good

# Supporting Developmental Leadership

1. Role model developmental leadership at the highest levels of the organization
2. Promote a learning goal orientation among those having people responsibility
3. Formalize developmental HRM practices to signal to managers that developing employees is important and to give them resources to provide this support to employees
4. Rethink training and development programs that prioritize «Top Performers». Devise instead inclusive development programs that invest in all employees

# Thank you!

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