

Adaptability Quotient – AQ - (capacity)

First understand -

Soft skills are a combination of [people skills](#), [social skills](#), [communication skills](#), [character traits](#), attitudes, career attributes,^[1] [social intelligence](#) and [emotional intelligence](#) quotients among others that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals with complementing hard skills.^[2] The [Collins English Dictionary](#) defines the term "soft skills" as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include [common sense](#), the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude."

AQ - The ability to adapt to and thrive in an environment of change.

AQ, or adaptability quotient, is something that is becoming increasingly prevalent as more and more [leaders](#) are talking about the [constant change](#) their organizations and their industries are undergoing.

Much has been written and researched about [IQ & EQ](#), but AQ is a component many leaders are still working to grasp.

The great [Andy Grove](#), who passed away earlier this year, was a dynamic and well-known leader at Intel and said this about change:

"Every company faces a critical point when it must change dramatically to rise to the next level of performance. If the company fails to see and seize that moment, it will start to decline. The key is courage."

But, courage to do what? CHANGE! Change is not easy; it's hard, and knowing what changes to make and when to make them is even harder. So how can we go about increasing our AQ?

Developing AQ

The ability to adapt starts with [taking accountability](#) of a situation for the necessary and needed changes.

In the book, [The Oz Principle](#), by Roger Connors, Craig Hickman, and Tom Smith, the authors introduce a model known as the Steps to Accountability that aligns itself extremely well to how one would increase their AQ.

The model consists of four steps: See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It. These four steps can help you create greater AQ in yourself and those around you:

1. See It. Acknowledge change is needed.

This step is about evaluating what's causing the [need for change](#), preparing yourself to make the change, and handling it in an open and candid matter.

To be successful at this step, you must openly obtain the perspective of others by asking questions about the situation as well as asking for positive and constructive feedback about how you might impact the change.

The perspectives and insight gained may not be what you want to hear--but hearing the hard things is critical in understanding how you need to adapt to the change with agility and effectiveness.

2. Own It. Take ownership of the situation.

It's natural that many people tend to resist change, but this apprehension can cause failure to occur when change is needed in order to win or survive.

It's imperative that you take accountability for the overall needed change. Own the fact that you will encounter some challenges and failures, but never lose sight of the goal while adjusting accordingly.

You must also operate on the principle that everyone involved is jointly accountable to get the right result, regardless of how little or how much an individual is accountable to deliver on.

3. Solve It. Develop your action plan.

When identifying possible solutions to facilitate adaptation, it really comes down to [asking one question](#), "What else can I (we) do?"

This one question is disruptive in nature and perfect in times of change. It breaks down silos between teams, inspires innovative solutions, and helps you assess when a risk must be taken.

When asking this question, it's important to understand that "what else" often means "think differently," not "do more."

4. Do It. Execute the change.

The final step is execution, follow through, and staying accountable to your team.

Trust is built throughout this entire process, but it's here where you truly are accountable to one another to get the right result. Success will come by being honest, transparent, and not blaming one another.

Championing Change

If there's one thing that is constant in life and in organizations, it's change. To increase your AQ, take accountability and help your organization not only deal with change but help them become champions of change.

I can articulate my special abilities, talents and skills.	5	4	3	2	1
I know what I have to do to regain my confidence when I temporarily lose it.	5	4	3	2	1
I have a strong sense of self-esteem and generally feel good about myself.	5	4	3	2	1
I can identify and communicate my weaknesses and the ways that I work with or around them.	5	4	3	2	1
I have a vision for my life that gives it meaning and purpose.	5	4	3	2	1

I know what is important to me and use this knowledge in making decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
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Professional and Personal Management

I take responsibility for managing my career.	5	4	3	2	1
I can see how my career fits into the bigger picture of my life plans.	5	4	3	2	1
I have a personal financial plan which I evaluate regularly based on my current situation.	5	4	3	2	1
I have contingency plans, a second option if my first doesn't work out.	5	4	3	2	1
I assess my strengths and weaknesses, outline ways to grow, and establish short and long range goals for my career.	5	4	3	2	1
I can market myself effectively, both inside and outside my organization.	5	4	3	2	1

Problem Solving and Decision Making

I have emerged stronger and have learned personal strategies to deal with change because of the changes in my life.	5	4	3	2	1
I can organize my surroundings and prioritize tasks, even in stressful times.	5	4	3	2	1
I can find and mobilize necessary resources in a crisis or new situation.	5	4	3	2	1
I can usually think of several alternatives to solving a problem.	5	4	3	2	1
When experiencing stress in one area of life, I can contain it within that area.	5	4	3	2	1

Attitude

I believe that I always have options and choices, even in difficult situations.	5	4	3	2	1
I generally approach life as an optimist.	5	4	3	2	1
I have a sense of humor. I can find things to laugh about even in dark times.	5	4	3	2	1
I understand there is growth in new experiences and enjoy learning from them.	5	4	3	2	1
I expect life to have ups and downs and not always go as I would like it to.	5	4	3	2	1
I don't spend time worrying about things that are out of my control.	5	4	3	2	1

Knowledge of Competencies

I would describe myself as a continuous learner.	5	4	3	2	1
I regularly spend time keeping my knowledge and skills current.	5	4	3	2	1
I know the skills that will be required in my profession in the next several years.	5	4	3	2	1
I know what others in my organization expect of me.	5	4	3	2	1
I know how my current skills are viewed by my boss, peers and organization.	5	4	3	2	1
I know which behaviors and attitudes are rewarded in my organization.	5	4	3	2	1

125-145 You've got seriously bendable abilities!

100-124 You'll do OK in Yoga, but need to work on yourself

75-99 So, touching your toes is also hard? Start increasing your range of motion today!

Anything lower...you need serious help. Call a doctor!