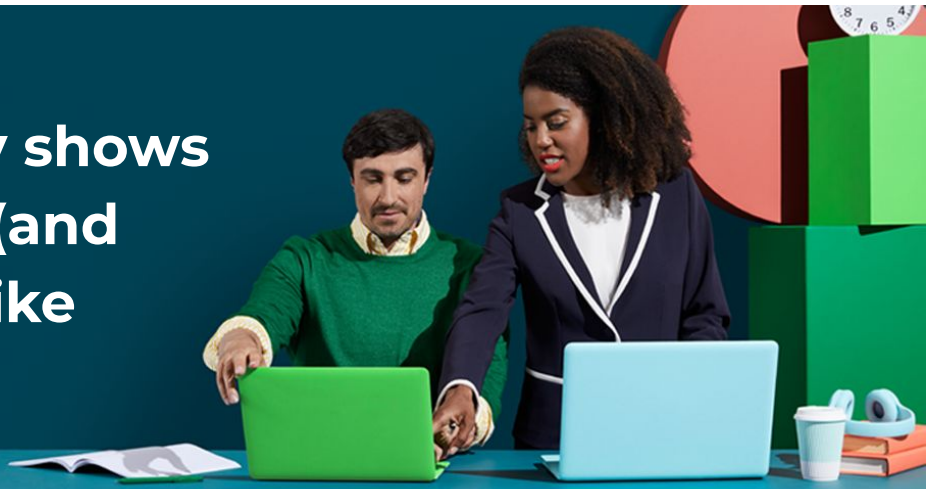


# Singularity University shows what working faster (and doing it right) looks like



**INDUSTRY:** Education  
**EMPLOYEES:** 800+  
**CATEGORIES:** Marketing/Content/Social Media

Adam Hofmann created agile teams before “doing agile” was a thing. At the time, he wasn’t trying to change the business world, he was just trying to get work done. Hofmann was working for a startup in 2009. As in many young businesses, it needed expertise in a lot of areas, but it had limited skillsets in-house. And it had to get the most mileage out of every dollar spent.

Those challenges led Hofmann to find quality talent on Upwork. Like most people, he initially experimented with the platform to find talent for a specific project. Before long, contracting independent talent on Upwork became the standard for how teams got quality work done as the business expanded.

Over the last decade, Hofmann introduced Upwork to every organization where he’s worked. In his current position as VP of marketing at Singularity University, he utilizes talent found on Upwork to expand the capacity of his team and experiment in a nimble fashion. “Upwork really helps our marketing team find new talent, run experiments, see if things are going to work, and then decide whether or not we want to scale them a lot faster than we could otherwise,” says Hofmann.

## Balancing speed and stability at scale

Few would argue that economic, social, and technological changes brought on by the digital world are transforming how businesses and employees work. [McKinsey](#) observed that successfully agile companies manage this shifting business scene by driving speed and creating stability.

## RESULTS

# 2x

Faster leads processing

# 30%

Higher productivity

# 2-3 days

Time to find talent

*“Upwork really helps our marketing team find new talent, run experiments and see if things are going to work a lot faster than we could otherwise.”*



**Adam Hofmann**  
 VP Marketing  
 Singularity University

Being simultaneously dynamic and stable may seem like a paradox, but Hofmann demonstrates how it can be done on a team level. Let's break down how he did it, according to what McKinsey identified as the five traits of an agile company:

### **Strategy**

"As marketers, we must move quickly and nimbly. We must try new things and quickly know what works and what doesn't work," says Hofmann. His strategy is to scale and fill talent gaps with flexible talent so that his team can move faster and be more responsive to marketing opportunities and business partners.

### **Structure**

Everyone on Hofmann's team is registered on Upwork so they're empowered to find skilled talent on their own. "Their access to Upwork increases the speed we can work. I don't have to be a bottleneck because I know the right systems are in place for them to go find somebody great, get them hired, and start working with them quickly," says Hofmann.

### **Process**

Processes resemble guidelines rather than rigid rules. They're in place to help team members find the ideal talent efficiently and manage spend. For example, they could find and start talent in 24 hours, but they usually take two to three days to make sure they vet the person or agency properly. Hofmann says the team conducts a lot of interviews to make sure they choose someone they all "feel great about."

### **People**

Through practice, employees learn how to break work down into projects and identify what work should be done in-house and what should be offered to independent talent. Having a flexible staffing resource at their fingertips fosters an entrepreneurial spirit as team members think of new ideas that improve the team and business.

### **Technology**

Upwork provides the technology and services the team needs to find and contract independent talent and agencies in the least amount of time. The solution enables Hofmann to maintain visibility over total usage and ensure all onboarding and offboarding processes are met as usage scales.

*"[Giving the team] access to Upwork increases the speed we can work. I don't have to be a bottleneck because I know the right systems are in place for them to go find somebody great, get them hired, and start working with them quickly."*



**Adam Hofmann**  
VP Marketing  
Singularity University

## Inventing the future

“At Singularity University, we spend a lot of time with large organizations helping them invent the future,” says Hofmann. Hofmann turned that practice inward by innovating with flexible talent. The result: higher levels of creativity and a 30% rise in productivity.

Those results sparked curiosity from other functions. What began as one team using Upwork expanded to half the company on the platform to date. Each team contracts several independent professionals or an agency at a given time for development, recruiting, lead generation, and other projects.

Hofmann believes the most successful companies are adaptable and nimble and the most important way for businesses to achieve this is through independent talent. “We work with some of the most amazingly talented people around the world to move our projects forward and give us new ideas,” says Hofmann. “I can help the company out more by helping everybody else embrace this mindset and teach and empower them to do it.”

If your organization isn't fully agile yet, you can still benefit from the practice. Hofmann shows you just need to start and a good place may be with your team.



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**Adam Hofmann, VP Marketing at Singularity University**

Upwork is the leading online talent solution empowering businesses with flexible access to quality talent, on demand. Companies have access to a global pool of proven professionals in over 8,000 skills—from creative & design to software development.

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