LEARNING ORGANISATIONS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

DR. NEELAM GOEL

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJEE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI.

ABSTRACT *The concept of career is being shaken to its core. Employees now enjoy the prospect of 60-year careers. Yet at the same time, half-like of skill is rapidly falling. These new realities are forcing companies to rethink the way they manage careers and deliver always-on learning and development (l&d) opportunities. Leading companies are moving to overhaul their career models and l&d infrastructure for the digital age, though most organizations are still in the early stages of this transformation. The issue of improving employee careers and transforming corporate learning emerged as the most important human resource management trend in the last few years. Learning technology is changing rapidly. Traditional learning management system are being complemented with and replaced by a wide range of new technologies for content curation, delivery, video distribution and mobile use.*

As companies build the organization of the future, continuous learning is critical for business success. For today's digital organizations, the new rules call for a leaning and development organization that can deliver learning and development organization that can deliver learning that is always on and always available over a range of mobile platforms. The focus of human resource management has shifted from performance-based organisations to learning organisations.

Keywords:

WHAT IS A LEARNING ORGANISATION?

Most scholars view learning as the process that unfolds over time and link it with knowledge acquisition and improved performance. Some believe that behavioural change is required for learning others insist that new ways of thinking are enough. A learning organisation is therefore an organisation that is skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect knowledge and insights. A learning organisation has five main components: systematic problem solving, experimentation with new approaches, learning from own experience and past history, learning from the best practices of others via observation and disseminating knowledge quickly throughout the organisations. Many companies are practising these skills in their organisations to some extent. By creating systems and processes that support these activities and integrating them into the fabric of daily operations, companies can manage and learn more effectively.

Systematic problem solving- Systematic problem solving involves relying on the scientific methods than merely doing guess work for diagnosing problems. This approach insists more on the data analysis and facts than assumptions for decision making. Simple statistical tools like time- series analysis, histograms, pareto – analysis and decision tree analysis are some of the techniques used by the organisations for systematic decision making.

Therefore, most of training techniques in the organisations focus on the problem-solving techniques of employees using exercises, gamin theories and simulation techniques.

2) Experimentation – This activity involves systematic searching for and testing of new knowledge. Unlike problem solving, experimentation is usually motivated by opportunity and expanding horizons, not by current difficulties. It takes two main forms: Ongoing programs which involves a series of small continuous experiments to produce incremental gains in knowledge of employees and the one-of-a-kind demonstration projects that are a complex form of ongoing activities.

3) Learning from past experiences – Companies must review their success and failures, assess them systematically, and record the lessons in a form that employees find open and accessible. One expert has called this as "Santayana Review", citing this famous philosopher George Santayana who coined the phrase "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it". Unfortunately, too many managers today are indifferent and even hostile, to the past, and by failing to reflect on it, they let the valuable knowledge escape.

4) Learning from others – Of course not all learning comes from reflection and self- analysis. Sometimes the most powerful insights come from looking outside one's immediate environment to gain a new perspective. Enlightened managers know that even companies in completely different businesses can be fertile source of

ideas and catalysts for creative thinking. At these organisations, enthusiastic borrowing is replacing "the not invented here" syndrome.

Benchmarking is one way of gaining an outside perspective, another equally fertile source of ideas is customers. Conversations with customers invariably simulate learning, they are, after all, experts in what they do. Customers can provide up to date product information, competitive comparisons, insights into changing preferences, and immediate feedback about services and patterns of use. And companies need these insights at all the levels, from the executive suite to the shop floor. The learning organisations cultivate the art of open, attentive learning. The managers in learning organisations must be open to criticism.

Thus, whatever is the source of learning, the learning occurs in a receptive environment. Managers can't be defensive and must be open to criticism or bad news. This is a bit difficult challenge but essential for organisation's success. Learning organisations, by contrast, cultivate the art of attentive listening.

5) Transferring Knowledge – For learning to be more than a local affair, knowledge must be spread quickly and efficiently throughout the organisation. Ideas carry maximum impact when they are shared broadly rather than when they are handled in a few hands. A variety of mechanisms spur this process, including written, visual, oral reports, site visits and tours, personnel rotation programs, education and training programs and standardization programs. Each has distinctive strengths and weaknesses.

WHAT EMPLOYEES EXPECT FROM ORGANISATIONS?

In many instances, employees themselves are pushing for continuous skill development and dynamic careers. Glassdoor date reveal that among Millennials, the "ability to learn and progress" is one the principal driver of a company's employment brand. Yet only one-third of millennials believe their organization are using their skills well and 42 percent say they are likely to leave because they are not learning fast enough.

Leading organizations are paying attention. Companies with dynamic career models outperform their peers by providing continuous learning opportunities and deeply embedded culture of development. As the authors of the 100-Year Life point out, employees facing careers spanning 60 to 70 years expect employers to help them continually reinvent themselves, move from role to role and find their calling over time.

Companies worldwide are scrambling to catch up with employees' desires. Fully 83 percent of the respondents we surveyed this year say their organizations are shifting to flexible, open career models that offer enriching assignments, projects and experiences rather than a static career progression. And 42 percent of surveyed respondents now believe their organization's employees will have careers that span five years or less.

THE NEED FOR RAPID SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND THE COMMODITIZATION OF CONTENT

Virtually all CEOs (90 percent) believe their company is facing disruptive change driven by digital technologies and 70 percent say their organization does not have the skills to adapt. This doubt reflects the fact that skills are becoming obsolete at an accelerating rate. Software engineers must now redevelop skills every 12-18 month. professionals in marketing, sales, manufacturing, law, accounting and finance report similar demands.

The good news is that an explosion of high-quality, free or low-cost content offers organization and employees ready access to continuous learning. Thanks to tools such as YouTube and innovators such as khan academy, Udacity, Udemy, Coursers, Nonvoid, edX and others, a new skill is often only a mouse click away. Leading universities offer graduate-level courses online through edX micro-master's degree. Completion of a series of online courses opens the door for learners to then apply for admission to a formal master's program at one of the many top institutions participating.

The ongoing commoditization of content can be highly disruptive to corporate L&D departments. They face a stark choice: harness this trend to their company's benefit or risk watching their learning programs become obsolete.

Leading companies are embracing continuous learning delivered digitally. GE created Brilliant U- an online learning platform that features video sharing and offers employee-driven learning across the enterprises. In year one, more than 30 percent of GE employees developed content and shared it with their peers.

CASE STUDY: THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Top-tier research universities offer insights into new approaches for CLOs struggling to adjust to demands for convergence. The university of Southern California (USC) is leading the charge on how learning can drive innovation and empower individuals to reach their peak performance.

Like many organizations, USC realized it needed to rethink its underlying approach to make a real impact. Under the guidance of provost, Michael Quick and president, C.L.Max Nikias, USC challenged itself to reimagine how learning can be used as a strategic asset for the student, university and society at large.

USC has 19 distinct "business units", each with its own profit and loss statement. Like many corporate CLOs, USC faced the challenge of breaking through the silos. The process started with interdisciplinary thinking, bringing, together learners and researchers from distinct business units. This yielded incremental benefits, but not real change.

The next step in the evolution was convergence-forming interdisciplinary teams from the ground up, focusing on a specific problem and then using all the assets of an organization to attack it. In the Eli and Edythe Broad Centre for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research, the university brought together leading minds in science and top talent from the cinematography school. Why the cinema school? Because it offered advanced skills in digital imaging and virtual reality, accelerating the work of the science team to solve complex scientific issues. This not only brought new cinema school employees as well-a prime example of learning and convergence.

Another example is the Iovine and Young Academy for Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation, for Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation, established with a gift from the founders of Innovation, established with a gift from the founders of Beats. In an early example of convergence, beats brought design thinking, engineering and the love of music to a breakthrough design for headsets. As the company grew, finding the right talent proved a constant challenge. To solve it, beats worked with Dr Erica Muhl, dean of the Roski School of Art and Design, to found the academy at USC focusing on "new literacies", including visual design, collaboration and iterative design, technical skills and business acumen. This approach has led to breakthrough design thinking that is being applied to advanced cancer research and global, satellite-based WI-Fi for the world.

What lessons should corporate CLOs apply? Think beyond interdisciplinary and move to convergence. Focus on defining and addressing tough problems which, if solved, would make a real impact. Challenge teams to go after vexing problem by starting from the ground up. Bring together people with non-traditional skill.

Companies such as Nestle, Dell and following this path to build new corporate learning functions, using their corporate university as a cornerstone for collaboration, leadership development and cress-functional innovation. As people become more relationship and community connections becomes integral to performance and innovation.

CONCLUSION

The impact of the fourth industrial revolution is fundamentally changing the nature of work and the meaning of career and making it imperative to constantly refresh one's skill. Unlike some of this year's trends where the organization can help drive what needs to be done, when it comes to learning, the organization's role is to create the environment and systems to allow employees to constantly learn and relearn. The explosion of free content means that the learning organization should seamlessly integrate internal and external content into its platforms.

The learning organisations are not built overnight. Most successful examples of the learning organisations are out of carefully cultivated attitudes, commitments, and the management processes that have accrued slowly and steadily over time. Still, some changes can be made immediately. Any company that wishes to become a learning organisation can being by taking a few steps.

The first step in this direction is fostering an environment which is conducive to learning. there must be time for reflection and analysis, think about strategic plans, dissect customer needs, assess current work systems, and invent new products. Learning is difficult when employees are harried or rushed, it tends to be driven out of the pressures of the moment. Only if top management explicitly frees up employee's time for the purpose does learning occur with any frequency. That time will be doubly productive if employees possess the skills to use it wisely. Training in brainstorming, problem solving, evaluating experiments, and core learning skills is therefore essential.

Another powerful lever is to open up boundaries and stimulate the exchange of idea. Boundaries inhibit he flow of information, they keep individuals and groups isolated and reinforce preconceptions. Once the managers have established a more supportive, open environment, they can create learning forums. these are programs or events designed with explicit learning goals in mind m and they can take a variety of forms: strategic reviews which examine the changing competitive environment and the company's product portfolio, technology and the positioning systems.

Each of these activities foster learning by requiring the employees to wrestle with new knowledge and consider its implications. Each can also be tailored to business needs. Together these efforts help to eliminate barriers that impede learning in an organisation and takes the organisation a step higher on the learning curve by fostering learning and reducing the organisation's overall cost.

ENDNOTES

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