



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Discover the Potential of Chief Learning Officers

Business pundits have termed this time “the knowledge era” - accurately describing the new business environment. With the knowledge boom, organizations need to redefine their goals to capture the essence of building a ‘learning organization.’ Hence, a new job profile has been created in many organizations - that of a Chief Learning Officer (CLO).

CLO - The Architect of a Learning Organization

To remain competitive, organizations have to make sure that their employees continue to learn. A CLO helps build a learning organization. A CLO’s primary goal is to motivate employees to build competencies that will make them successful and to align training and developmental programs with company strategies, goals and objectives.

CLOs also create a workplace environment in which learning can easily take place and is, in fact, expected of all employees. They also evaluate learning to determine the return on ‘learning investments.’ This helps measure the learning success in an organization.

CLOs identify business goals and needs by reviewing the company Business Plans and interviewing managers and executives. The premise is that matching the identified goals with employee competencies will lead to the desired level of productivity. A CLO can then ideally redesign training curricula to match the organizational goals.

While some organizations create the CLO designation to focus on the job of restructuring and aligning training, other tasks sometimes assigned to CLOs are aiding succession planning, team building and leadership training.

The CLO Challenge

The CLO movement is driven by the goal of building staff competencies required to meet the future business needs of the company. One component of this goal is to spend education budgets more efficiently and effectively. For instance, the CLO can centralize the overall training function and help ensure that the company is getting the most bang from its limited training dollars. Simply validating that all training money is spent to help employees meet organization objectives will result in a decrease in spending, and a potential reallocation of training dollars to areas where more value is received. The CLO should also put processes in place to try to measure the business return on the training dollars being spent to ensure that the money that is being spent is having the desired effects.