



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### Learning Quotient

The difference in learning abilities of organizations determines their destiny.

Success and failure are expressions best described by an organization's ability to first unlearn and then re-learn. Most corporations are striving to breed a learning culture in order to impart agility and swiftness to their performance drive. Few though have been successful.

This is largely attributed to the mindset associated with learning. Most organizations view learning opportunities as a means to provide employees with altruistic favors. It is rarely considered a must-have for employees who want to hone their skills and build their competencies.

However, the good news is that organizations are beginning to alter their perceptions of transforming into spirited learned workplaces. Another reason to celebrate comes from the fact that industry stalwarts have taken the lead.

#### **The learned companies**

One large company, for instance, has instituted a learning program that is largely driven by its peer processes. The concept of knowledge generation and knowledge sharing at this company is based on the fact that leveraging customer preferences, technology and business methods is an effective way of building a learning culture that would help companies create a definite competitive advantage.

This company devised a three tier system of peer processes that was aimed at facilitating knowledge sharing across organizational levels. The system includes:

##### *Peer groups*

This tier of the peer processes is responsible for knowledge sharing between the executive committee and senior management officials on the business methods and technological know-how of the business.

##### *Peer reviews*

This tier emphasizes knowledge sharing through supervision of cross-functional business strategies. Senior functional heads study the business model of other business units listing out the weaknesses, strengths and opportunities stemming from existing business models.

##### *Peer assists*

This level of peer processes aims at providing working assistance to all employees across the globe. Acquiring the right know-how for executing the right job at the right time is the essence of peer assistance.

Integrating the three peer processes to deliver unparalleled business knowledge and technical expertise has improved the way things work. This company has managed to integrate collaborative learning and knowledge management in its culture.



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With this, they have redefined the meaning of a learning organization. Continuous and consistent exchange of information and knowledge about customer preferences, business methods and techniques of innovation is now a done thing.

### **To learn is to earn**

Organizations like this are therefore deemed progressive in nature. These organizations have been rather perceptive about the role of knowledge sharing and learning in corporate growth. Thus companies desirous of building a definite competitive advantage need to ensure that learning initiatives drive their culture.

Building a learning culture calls for definite and gradual modifications in terms of employee and employer behavior. Leaders and senior managers need to emphasize the need to continuously learn and share knowledge and experiences that have the potential to enrich employees both personally and professionally.

The behavioral modifications that ensure the making of a learning organization are rather time consuming and gradual. Organizations that wish to become learned need to cultivate a sense of awareness among leaders and managers about why learning is an intelligent lifelong investment.

Thereby, organizations can integrate their performance management systems with learning initiatives providing employees and leaders sufficient opportunities to make a difference. Linking learning programs to employee appraisals would help both managers and employees as it would elicit seriousness from both parties.

In addition to the upgraded skills and other personal advantages, learning is a potential tool for mitigating the impending labor and skills shortage. The two most important and significant ways by which learning promises to circumvent the skills shortage are:

#### *Personal development*

Learning initiatives are fast becoming a critical pre-requisite for employees. They are rather skeptical about career development plans that employers offer before signing an employment offer. Thus chalking out an effective and promising offer that has enough scope for employees to learn and build their knowledge base is critical for building a learning organization.

Learning is no longer a business privilege or an altruistic measure but a must-have.

#### *Home bred talent*

There is little doubt about the intensity of the impending labor and skills shortage. Thus, companies that are more forward looking and have the ability to provide employees with learning opportunities are more likely to beat the heat. Corporate education and training are hence becoming business imperatives.

Developing home bred talent instead of relying on external sources could provide the winning edge needed to sustain corporate performance levels.



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Learning is a business imperative essential to enhance and maintain business productivity and employee retention. So breed a workforce that is hungry for knowledge is today's corporate mantra. But before getting a famished workforce, have enough bait in place.