Leading the Adaptive Enterprise:

Became a Learning Organization
Today’s Presenters

**Guest Speaker**

Stanton E.F. Wortham

- **Boston College** – Dean at the Boston College Lynch School of Education
- **Award-Winning** – teacher, scholar, and documentary film producer
- **Author** – numerous books on organizational culture, organizational learning and discourse analysis.

**Host**

Alan Todd

Founder and CEO, Corp/U
Extraordinary Investments Have Been Made in Learning & Leadership

Majority of leadership positions filled with outsiders at 18% more pay

Source: SHRM

Employee engagement remains near all time lows

Source: Gallup

Average manager tenure: 6.3 years

Source: BLS
Overwhelming evidence shows that most companies are unable to transfer employee learning into changes in individual and organization behavior or improved financial performance.

Put simply, companies are not getting the return they expect on their investment in training and education.

$164.2 billion Spent on Corporate Learning
\[ B = f (P, E) \]

Behavior is a function of the person and the environment (system).

Kurt Lewin, 1936
Most Widely Used In Corporate Learning: BERSIN by Deloitte

Tactical Learning

- Incidental Training
  - Source of Ad-hoc Job Support | Mentoring & Apprenticeship | Emerging Need for Professional Training | SME Focused

Operational Learning

- Training & Development Excellence
  - Source of Designed Instruction | Evolving Governance & Operations | Improving L&D Core Processes | Program Focused

- Integration with Talent Strategies

Strategic Learning

- Talent & Performance Improvement
  - Source of Talent Development & Performance Consulting | Integrated with HR/TM Improving Alignment | Process & Tech Focus

- Organizational Capability
  - Source of Business Performance Capability & Learning Agility | Executive Driven | Cultural & Systemic Focus
Learning organizations are organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where collective aspiration is set free, and people continually learn how to learn together.

Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline
LEADER’S JOB: HELPING ORGANIZATION LEARN HOW TO LEARN

A Leader’s Job: Helping The Organization Learn How to Learn

TUESDAY FEB 7

Leader’s Job: Helping The Organization Learn How to Learn

Leaders are the ones who forge the way forward and lay the path for others to converge and create something great. Leaders carve out space in the work agenda to allow for exploration and experimentation. Leaders set the tone for how individuals and teams will respond when something they try fails. And, leaders cultivate a team’s ability to sense changes in the market and to respond.

In this video, Stanton expands on the responsibility of leaders in making learning a part of organizational priorities.

Stanton Wortham, Ph.D.

MARK COMPLETE
A Fast-changing World.

It’s not unmanageable...
We need to learn how to manage differently.
Adaptability is Essential

How do we do it?

1. Contemporary environments are changing rapidly
   People are key to noticing and seizing opportunities
2. Learning is the key to adaptability
   Not just a matter of a marketing strategy
3. We must prepare people for situations we can’t imagine
   This is hard

C O R P / U
POLL

What is most important to create an adaptive organization?

1. Develop individual knowledge and skills
2. Develop individuals’ dispositions
3. Change organizational systems
4. Transformational change of org systems
Learning Extends Beyond Knowledge

Tend to think of learning and talent development as a matter of knowledge and skills… Important but not sufficient.

4 Kinds of Change:
- Develop individuals’ knowledge and skills
- Develop individuals’ dispositions
- Change organizational systems
- Transformational change in organizational systems
Dispositions

Beyond simple knowledge to enduring habits
• Do not focus just on school-like knowledge
• Dispositions crucial to organizational success

These are more difficult to change
• Openness/listening/questioning
• Willingness to admit errors and ask for help
• Empathy
Organizational Systems

Beyond individuals’ characteristics to systems

• Organizational processes are accomplished through system of individuals and tools
  • Like navigating a battleship

First type of systemic change: single-loop learning

Example

• Better information technology facilitates more efficient identification of clients
“Expansive” learning, transformational change in systems
  • Challenging assumptions embedded in systems
  • Just becoming more efficient will not suffice

Examples
  • Disseminating information on broad swaths of the economy, in order to allow inference
  • Strategy from the bottom up
    - “One day we noticed that we had a healthcare strategy”
How do you prepare your organization to navigate uncertainty?

1. Hire experts
2. Gather data and ask questions
3. Set clear goals and metrics
4. Embrace solutions that have bubbled up from the front-line
The Dangers of Expertise

Experts can become reliant on familiar patterns

Because of their experience, they think they know new situations
  • This can be dangerous in changing environments
  • Can miss new challenges and opportunities

Also often involves emotional patterns and sense of self
  • Expertise is not just a cognitive phenomenon
Openness as an Alternative

How can leaders remain open to changing environments?

• Sensitivity to actual situations
• Avoid expertise, strategy insofar as it constrains

Empirical research helps

• Gather data, instead of assuming you know

Conceptual reimagining

• Envision alternatives by changing fundamental assumptions
• e.g., system-based vs. individual account of learning
Questioning and Listening

Questions are a good model for the sort of approach required to be adaptive
- Questions provide structure but remain open to multiple answers
- Hard to ask good questions that capture interest
- Get people looking at evidence and building arguments

Have to be the right kind of questions
- Interpretive questions, not fact questions or evaluative questions

Requires listening carefully to answers and tailoring questions

Sometimes conversation yields something beyond the sum of the parts
POLL

What is the most pressing learning issue your organization faces?

1. We must learn to change faster
2. We must focus on deeper learning and dispositions
3. We must transform our organizational systems
4. Our leaders must be learning role-models
Conclusions

Learning allows us to take in new information and respond more nimbly
  • This is essential to be adaptive in rapidly changing environments

Thus learning is a central responsibility of leaders
  • Learning is key to the survival of the business

Think of learning broadly
  • Knowledge, dispositions, systems, transformation in systems

Openness, uncertainty crucial
Questions?
UP NEXT MONTH

CorpU Smarter Growth Series

Become a Positive Organization by Developing Positive Leaders

You will learn how positive practices prepare leaders to:
• Inspire teams to achieve goals they never thought possible
• Create a culture of engagement to improve retention
• Help teams make better decisions and solve problems more effectively

Guest Speaker

Dr. Kim Cameron

William Russell Kelly Professor of Management and Organizations
Author, Positive Leadership
Thank you