



## **Chapter XIII**

# **In the Future: Learning Will Reshape Our World at Work, at Home, and at School**

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### **Preparing Today for Success Tomorrow**

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Earning and learning go hand-in-hand. In a business environment that is constantly growing and changing due to new innovations, advanced technology and market conditions, organizations must find new ways to enable rapid responses to the needs of their customers and the marketplace. This means having an adequately-educated workforce that will not only respond to evolving issues, but even foresee upcoming trends and proactively pursue these arising challenges.

Businesses that understand how learning can enhance productivity, enable development of employee potential, and empower employees and teams to innovate will be the businesses that profit well into the future.

## Five Dimensions of Change

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Companies committed to transforming into a learning organization must evaluate change in five dimensions: governance and management, design and delivery, technology, organizational alignment, and culture.

The first stage of change, *governance and management*, requires dedication from everyone in the company. An organization must develop an enterprise-wide view of learning and align learning investments with organizational priorities. Like most business plans, learning needs to start from the top and trickle-down.

Once a company is committed to learning on all levels, the other changes can follow.

The second change that must be implemented is the *design and delivery of learning*. Learning has been steadily evolving to meet the requirements of an on-demand world. Once an instructor-led, classroom-based environment, learning is now growing into a dynamic student-centric and highly interactive experience that can be customized to each individual.

While traditional teaching venues (classrooms, lectures, and manuals) continue to provide value for the individual, the team and the organizational learning, the marketplace now demands other means of learning. Learning is most effective when a combination of learning methods is blended together. This blended-learning approach integrates traditional-learning methods with e-learning so they can be embedded into everyday activities. Most workers report they learned the most from on-the-job experience. Understanding the need to learn while working, many companies are using technology to embed learning into everyday workflow.

*Technology* is the third dimension of change and an increasingly important component of a successful learning program. Thousands of companies already use intranets, instant messenger programs, e-mail and PDAs, but many of the companies are not aware that these are perfect channels for training.

For those employees, who are frequently traveling, using PDAs and other mobile devices to learn, could create valuable training time that might otherwise have been wasted sitting in an airport. Lately, companies have adopted an on-demand approach to business, and thus, learning methods have to adjust to fit these fast-paced lifestyles and always be “on”.

Learners were once confined to meeting in a classroom, but by embedding learning into the daily workflow, an employee can log onto the company’s intranet to take an online course, post messages on a message board and even chat with colleagues thousands of miles away as they discuss a recent business challenge, but more importantly, collaborate on a solution. There are many different tools available to use for learning, but equally important, there is no specific schedule when to use them.

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