

THREE LEARNING INTERVENTIONS EVERY ORGANISATION SHOULD ADOPT



Life is about learning, from the moment we are created, to the day we close our eyes for the last time, life is a journey of discovery. It's a wonder to see young children learn, with those fresh eye's, open minds and that boisterous enthusiasm.

Once we reach adulthood, having passed through the education system which, let's face it, for many of us squeezes out every drip of our desire to learn, that fresh, open and enthusiastic approach is long gone!

I found that education stalled my learning in so many ways, and I find that such a sad thing – because I absolutely LOVE LEARNING! For many years I saw learning only as something that would give me another qualification, from first exams, to A levels, degree and on to Masters. It was an endless trawl of fact finding, writing in the style 'they' wanted and leaving it to the last minute!

Now I can honestly say, I wake in the morning and the first thing I do it start exploring my lesson of the day, be it to support a friend or colleague through something, understanding an illness of a contact better, learning how to overcome an issue I have, or new skills and knowledge. What ever the subject, I TED Talk it, YouTube it, Google it, Audible it... so many options, SO MUCH TO LEARN.

One thing I have noticed in my 20+ years' experience in business is that many organisations fail to adopt the basic learning opportunities that can make a measurable difference to their overall people performance – through improved skills, motivation and engagement, resulting in demonstrable improvements on their economic results.

Positive organisational psychology research in recent years has proven the benefits of improved employee engagement on performance of an organisation as a whole, through working practice efficiencies, attendance, health, retention/loyalty and more. This article shares my long-held view of the key learning focus points every organisation should adopt for improved performance.

COMMUNICATION

The main challenge for business in modern day working, partly due to sheer size of some organisations, but also in smaller organisations due to busyness of people within, is communication, or rather a lack of it! One of my first lessons in communication was; if someone misunderstands what you said, it's probably your fault. In fact, there is so much that can go wrong in communication, it's amazing that anyone ever does get it right.

Poor communication is estimated to cost UK and US businesses over £30 billion a year? Another startling estimate is that around 58% of projects in business fail due to breakdown in communications. If this isn't enough to help recognise how incredibly important communication skills are for business, how about recognising that nearly 20% of every working week is wasted due to poor communication? The pressure people are under to deliver more in less time, means that time is precious, so wasting nearly 20% of it on miscommunications is quite simply unjustified.

Poor relationships are even more destructive and cost companies time in reduced efficiency, higher absence rates and even staff leaving.

Communication is not just about saying the right words to another person, it's a whole host of elements such as your tone of voice, the visual story you tell and the style in which you do all of the above. It's also from the receiver's point of view about listening, asking questions and checking understanding.

By developing skills in communication people can work more candidly together, develop a higher respect for one another and of course, are clearer in their messaging and understanding. Good communication skills give people confidence to check their understanding, ask if they don't understand and therefore leave any communication situation clear in what is expected of them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The second is Leadership and Management. People don't leave their job; they leave their manager (or leaders!).

It's not rocket science to be a great manager or leader, you simply need time to reflect on how your behaviours impact on those around you, how you can support the people in your teams and how you can manage the pulls of the different roles of task, individual and team you are faced with. These are skills you can learn if you want to be taught and they are skills that a scary number of managers and leaders are never taught and never given time given to reflect on.

By training and developing managers and leaders, businesses can in turn impact all those within their teams – the average manager has 4-6 in their team, beyond that, second- and third-line managers and leaders can have 60 – 70 + in their teams. Imagine if they are developed to be the best, to develop their people and empower their people to be the best they can be... there is no excuse not to invest in developing management and leadership skills in any organisation, and the return on this investment is tenfold.

TEAM DEVELOPMENT

The third is team development. Different people coming together to form a 'team' can be an interesting dynamic. We've all worked in teams where personalities clash, where people object to one another, or simply work apart from one another only to come together at the end of a piece of work to realise the pieces they've been working on individually don't fit together. We've struggled through not knowing something, doing research alone, working to overcome a challenge, only to

find out later on that a team member has experience and could have helped if only we'd known or been in a position to ask for help.

If teams are well built, not just with quality people, but with quality structure and long-lasting support, they are more likely to hold together in tough times and work together to achieve over the odds.

Of course, each individual business has more opportunities to develop their people's capabilities, but these three are generic requirements that any business that involves people should be reviewing and working towards.

As always, I hope this article has been useful to you. If you have any learning needs you'd like to share or discuss, please connect with us either on linked in (Thirst4 Learning Ltd) or via hello@thirst4learning.com.

Best wishes to all.