Special supplement

global focus

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Digital Age Learning

Explorations of the digital world and the potential for learning

Special supplement

Digital Age Learning

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The digital revolution profoundly impacts the future of work and it requires a fundamental rethink of the corporate learning function. EFMD launched the Digital Age Learning Special Interest Group to look in depth at how learning must change and how the function has to shape up in this disruptive context.

Sponsored by Steven Smith, head of the Corporate University at Capgemini, and supported by Spanish business school IESE, this group brought together 16 companies working on some of the building blocks for digital age transformation such as re-imagining learning architecture, harnessing the power of social learning, transforming the user experience and more.

The group built its point of view on "the nature of learning in the digital age," based on business and academic literature, the direct experiences of the group as well as neuroscience.

Global Focus has selected seven articles to illuminate the process of digital age learning, from a corporate case study to broad explorations of the digital world and the potential for learning to be transformed.

Build capability and community

+ Place critical business questions at the centre
+ Engage talent with a vested interest in the question

GAIN solutions for the business and a community of talent that create meaningful behaviours and content for continuous learning

Collaborate and align

+ Bring together talent from diverse business backgrounds and expertise
+ Focus them on client and market challenges

OBTAIN alignment across the organisation through effective collaboration

Transform and grow

+ Build capability and community
+ Collaborate and align

EVOLVE the organisation and its people

Capgemini itself is in the process of digital transformation as a global company and this presents huge opportunities for its corporate university to enable and facilitate this transformation. Corporate university head Smith set himself a long-term agenda for doing this in 1995 when he moved from Corporate Strategy into Corporate Learning. And it still holds good in 2017. The linking piece that is missing but that informs every one of these tasks is technology.

"The advent of the digital ages provides even greater ways of achieving capability building, community, collaboration and alignment within organisations, as well as accelerating both the results, and the speed at which we need to transform and grow. Exciting times!" (Steven Smith, Capgemini Corporate University).

This is a key reason to bring together a leading business school, renowned specialists and 16 multinational companies to gain insight into how it can be tackled! The SIG Report offers a detailed report of this process, and this special *Global Focus* supplement gives you a taste of how this worked.

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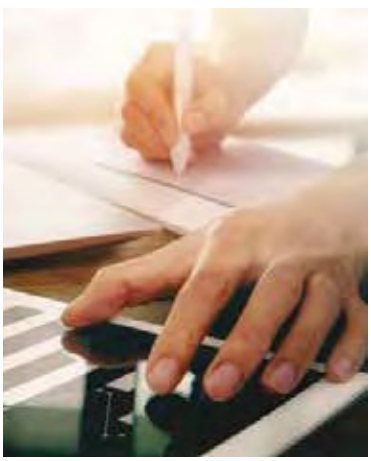

Global Focus *has selected seven articles to illuminate the process of digital age learning, from a corporate case study to broad explorations of the digital world and the potential for learning to be transformed*

Why Digital Age Learning is important

Nigel Paine

In the current *Global Human Capital Trends* report, which Deloitte has produced for the last five years, the focus has exclusively turned to "rewriting the rules for the digital age". In the Preface, the authors defend this focus by claiming that "in an age of disruption business and HR leaders are being pressed to rewrite the rules for how they organise, recruit, develop, manage and engage the 21st-century workforce".

The point is to illustrate that the curve of technological disruption and change is far steeper than business productivity and that gap is the opportunity to improve performance. So digital age learning is both a reflection of technological change and opportunity, as well as a response to the wider changes in organisations and in society.

Digital age learning is not a fad or a fashion but a critical shift in the demands made on employees as they grapple with fundamental changes in where and how they work and even what constitutes work.

Meanwhile, organisations have to be ever vigilant because the ability of outside organisations to fundamentally disrupt what they do is always present. This is why the Capgemini distinction between merely translating learning into a digital format and transforming learning using technologies to re-assess the purpose, function and outcomes of learning is such an important fundamental shift that every learning organisation should be undertaking. This, as the Deloitte report so aptly says, is a "new game, new rules".

In a recent presentation the CEO of Microsoft, Satya Nadella, said that companies succeeding in digital transformation are doing four things:

Virtualisation	*Digitalistion*
E-learning	Digital and social learning
Focus on contents and their virtualisation	Focus on learners and on the business
Massification	Personalisation
Organisation structured in departments	Agile and transdisciplinary teams
Focus on digital technology	Focus on digital learning communities

- Becoming more engaged with customers
- Empowering their employees
- Optimising how they run their business operations
- Transforming the products and services they offer using digital content

It is almost inconceivable that any of those shifts are possible without the profound engagement of the staff concerned and the ability to relearn and reposition what they do. But to accomplish those four transformations requires a complete rethink of what learning is and how it should be delivered. The old model is too clumsy and slow to deliver results and too top down in the learning models that are being used.

You could say, imitating Nadella, that those involved in learning have to become much more engaged with the staff they serve, develop new ways of empowering their employees to work it out themselves, to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning organisation and then transform those services they offer using digital content and digital processes. It is hard to see how you can separate the transformation of organisations from the necessary transformation of learning. And you could probably argue that the former is impossible without the latter.

A recent EFMD special interest group report on transparent and adaptive tolerant markets was called "When work is no longer work". In some ways, the special interest group on digital age learning could have been named: "when learning is no longer learning". Digital age learning signifies the almost complete merger of learning and work: work is learning and learning is work.

> ***Digital age learning is not a fad or a fashion but a critical shift in the demands made on employees as they grapple with fundamental changes in where and how they work and even what constitutes work***

Nick Van Dam, the chief learning officer at McKinsey, recently gave his inaugural professorial lecture at Nyenrode Business Universiteit in the Netherlands. He chose to call his lecture, "Learn or Lose". He termed this a "call to action" to help organisations deal with the "sweeping, rapid changes" that they face. This is as much a responsibility of the individual to embrace lifelong learning as it is of the organisation, which has a responsibility to upskill people and nurture new leaders.

Van Dam suggests that this incorporates two separate but related processes: the first is to enhance the strategic role of L&D, the second is to implement 21st-century L&D practices. At the core of this is innovation. Innovating learning and helping people innovate inside their organisations so that they can move fast and be comfortable working with uncertainty and complexity are at the heart of the changes.

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What is Digital Age Learning?

Regis Chasse

We live in the information age (aka the digital age), which is a period in human history characterised by a shift from industrial production to information and computerisation, changing significantly how people interact with businesses and each other.

Today, information is readily available and free. The democratisation of access to information has resulted in a shift in the distribution of power between government and citizen, retailer and consumer, manager and employee, teacher and student. Today, there is too much information for any one person to handle and that information becomes obsolete very quickly. Continuous, just-in-time access to the latest information has become paramount for all actors in society.

The digital age is the age of the empowered customer, who can now make intelligent choices about the right product for the right situation with all of the relevant data, just in time. In this new age the consumer, rather than the brand, controls the interaction. In order to survive and remain relevant, companies now need to quickly adapt to a constantly changing market. In this new era, being really good at learning how to do new things results in a competitive advantage.

Beyond corporations, individuals must also adapt their skills to remain relevant in the job market. The digital era requires individuals to be lifelong learners. It also stresses the importance of creative problem solving and the ability to make connections across domains in order to drive innovation. In the digital age, individuals must not only be able to find and navigate information but they also must be able to critically interpret that information. They must also be able to express their ideas effectively through digital media. In the digital age individuals must be digitally fluent.

Additionally, when thinking about digital age learners, we must understand that they are more overwhelmed, distracted and impatient than ever before. Today, digital age learners want to be empowered and collaborative.

> *The digital age is the age of the empowered customer, who can now make intelligent choices about the right product for the right situation with all of the relevant data, just in time*

What is Digital Age Learning?

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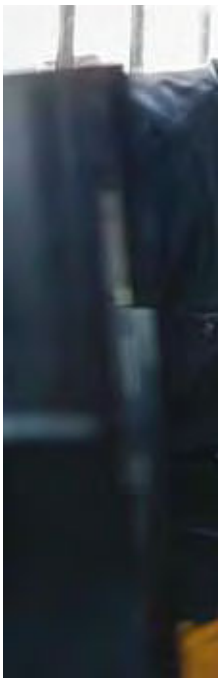

Given this context, we have identified six characteristics that define learning in the digital age:

1. Engaging through an exceptional and relevant learning experience

An attractive employee learning experience will generate intrinsic gratification, motivation and the active engagement necessary for more effective learning. To sustain that engagement, the act of learning must be relevant and meaningful, both for the learner and for the organisation. This is enabled through learner-centric design and business aligned objectives.

2. Empowering, personalised and self-directed

The developments in digital technology have enabled learners to choose what, how and when they learn. They seek learning that is personalised, that fits their individual preferences and needs: they want a "one size fits one" learning solution. A culture of self-directed learning is strongly emerging with individuals directing themselves towards which learning to follow.

3. Ubiquitous, just-in-time, on-demand and in context

Digital leaners want to learn at the time of need when they encounter a specific skill or knowledge gap that prevents them from completing a task or from achieving a desired tangible result. Learning must directly support the activities that the employees perform in the real world and on-the-job rather than focusing on teaching knowledge and theories. Individuals should be able to access this specific learning within their own context, when they need it.

"The developments in digital technology have enabled learners to choose what, how and when they learn. They seek learning that is personalised, that fits their individual preferences and needs: they want a "one size fits one" learning solution

4. The right blend of experiential, social, informal and formal

Learning happens continuously, in a multiplicity of contexts and modes, supported by technologies that enable any learner to easily access internal and external information and interact with networks of experts and peers. Mixing formats makes learning more effective. Choosing the right format for the right purpose is critical.

5. Hyper-connected with analytics everywhere

Digital age learners must be able to connect with learning resources, information, peers and experts to effectively learn in the digital age. Providing simple tools that enable these connections is important for learning organisations. Additionally, analytics can provide insights on the learners, their own development needs, what assets can meet their needs, how those assets are consumed, how learning can be improved and how effective learning activities are.

6. Continuous, based on inquiry, exploring and doing.

It is critical for individuals to own their development and continuously learn. A company must be a place where constant learning opportunities enable workers to stay relevant in their jobs and in the industry. Learning design must promote inquiry, exploring and doing so that learners are able to research solutions to specific situations and build their own answer based on collective experience and existing knowledge.

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Case Study

Siemens Global Learning Campus: The Siemens Learning World

Kai Liebert

Siemens offers its employees and managers throughout the world many diverse opportunities to develop their skills. Topics include Siemens products, specialist knowledge and methodology and business-specific and process-specific expertise.

Employees across the world can access learning programmes via intranet portals, reach agreements with their managers on learning measures to be taken and pursue them during their work time at the company's expense.

In addition to traditional classroom courses and workshops, Siemens is increasingly digitalising the learning environment, including virtual training courses and an internal video platform where employees themselves can contribute their knowledge ("user- and expert-generated content") and access knowledge available within the company in order to apply it to their specific situation and current challenges.

The Siemens Social Media platform supports the global exchange of knowledge and learning from one another in open and closed communities.

The pool of knowledge and experience is immense and is growing very quickly, especially in this era of digitalisation. This means that the Siemens learning organisation must design its learning portfolio more dynamically and make it available faster.

The goal is to give employees optimal orientation and targeted navigation to help them find the right learning content. This is where the concept of the new "Siemens Learning World" comes in.

This web platform is a central access point for selected or curated learning modules from Siemens and from outside the company. It helps users navigate the great diversity of offerings in

order to find up-to-date learning contents that are relevant for them more quickly and on a personalised basis.

In the "Digitalization Learning World", for example, employees will find a curated selection of up-to-date learning contents on the subject of digitalisation from internal and external providers. The platform offers access to specific course offerings, knowledge modules, training videos, e-learning measures, learning communities and so on.

Learning curators research and compile the learning contents or bundle them into context-appropriate learning recommendations. In addition to the preselection by the curators, the Learning World also employs search and filter algorithms to generate specific compilations from the data pool and make them accessible from the user interface. This allows for the flexible and dynamic provision of different topic areas; specialised learning recommendations can be retrieved for specific job profiles and the individual queries of users can be answered.

Users can also design their own individualised "My Learning World," in which (for example) filter settings are defined and up-to-date results are displayed dynamically in a personal user area. It also features "learning tags" with which the user can be continuously supplied with relevant learning contents. The learning modules can be rated, shared with and recommended to others.

With these functions, the Learning World is a dynamic, effective navigational aid to help our employees find the right learning programmes and platforms both inside and outside the company.

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Organisational design for a socially dynamic organisation

Julian Stodd

The Socially Dynamic Organisation is evolved: it is strong not simply through formal hierarchy, infrastructure and governance but rather through innovation, agility and the strength of its communities.

It is fundamentally reimagined from those organisations that came before: no longer a remnant of Victorian architectures of power and control but rather fluid, dynamic, interconnected, permeable to expertise, reconfigurable and deeply fair. I've been sketching out a representation of the core pillars of the Socially Dynamic Organisation, and how they relate to this evolved capability (See Figure 1)

I've started with Purpose.

Even the most utilitarian organisation needs strong purpose or, at least, it does if we want people to invest their engagement. Around this I have arrayed six core aspects of the Socially Dynamic Organisation: Community and Technology are central, bordered by Equality, Innovation, Controls and Leadership. Let me share the thinking behind this structure.

The Socially Dynamic Organisation is facilitated by technology: lightweight, interconnected, rapidly disposable and agile. It is also grounded in collaboration: the ability to create and segment spaces for the various communities. We are on the brink of widespread impacts from automation: machine learning and AI as well as robotics.

Integration of this technology into a holistic vision, a core purpose, is key: if we view technology as primarily about efficiency or cost saving we are missing its ability to facilitate and transform, to leverage capability. But we must not assume that technology operates in isolation of social power: will the adoption be fair, will it reinforce communities or decimate them? The Socially Dynamic Organisation must be in balance with technology, not simply excited by it.

Community is everywhere: we need to maintain a dynamic tension between our formal and social systems, between the formal community that is held within a hierarchy and the social community, which is held in bonds of trust and mutual respect.

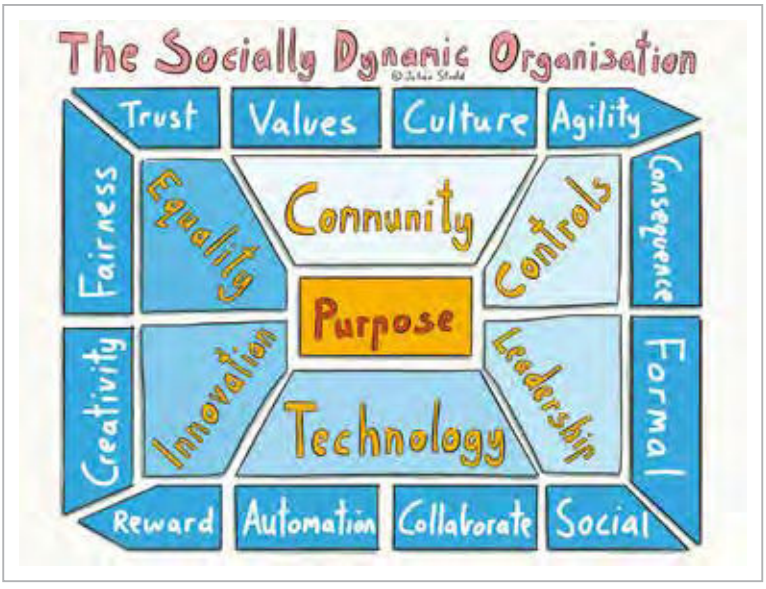
We need deep expertise in forming and hosting these communities, as well as a willingness to unlock and listen to them. Our key challenge is not engagement: it is in listening to the outputs from engagement. As the community starts to shape and share its interpretation of the story, are we willing to learn, to listen? The community is where a central part of our agility lies; not in systems or process but in people.

Equality sits front and centre, although I wrestled with what the relationship was between equality, fairness and trust, all aspects of a rebalancing, a better vision for a better, more socially connected organisation. I stuck with Equality in the central ring as it is something we should never forget: we have not won the battle for equality yet and it is one we need to continue to fight, while finding ways to phrase and understand it in differentiated global contexts.

Controls is an overarching term to address the overall mindset of the organisation towards control: does it seek to cage complexity and risk within bonds of rules and process or does it have a fluid and responsive approach to compliance: is it willing to learn from the community or simply to view community as something to control?

> *Community is everywhere: we need to maintain a dynamic tension between our formal and social systems, between the formal community that is held within a hierarchy and the social community, which is held in bonds of trust and mutual respect*

Figure 1



Digital Age Learning

Organisational design for a socially dynamic organisation

Julian Stodd

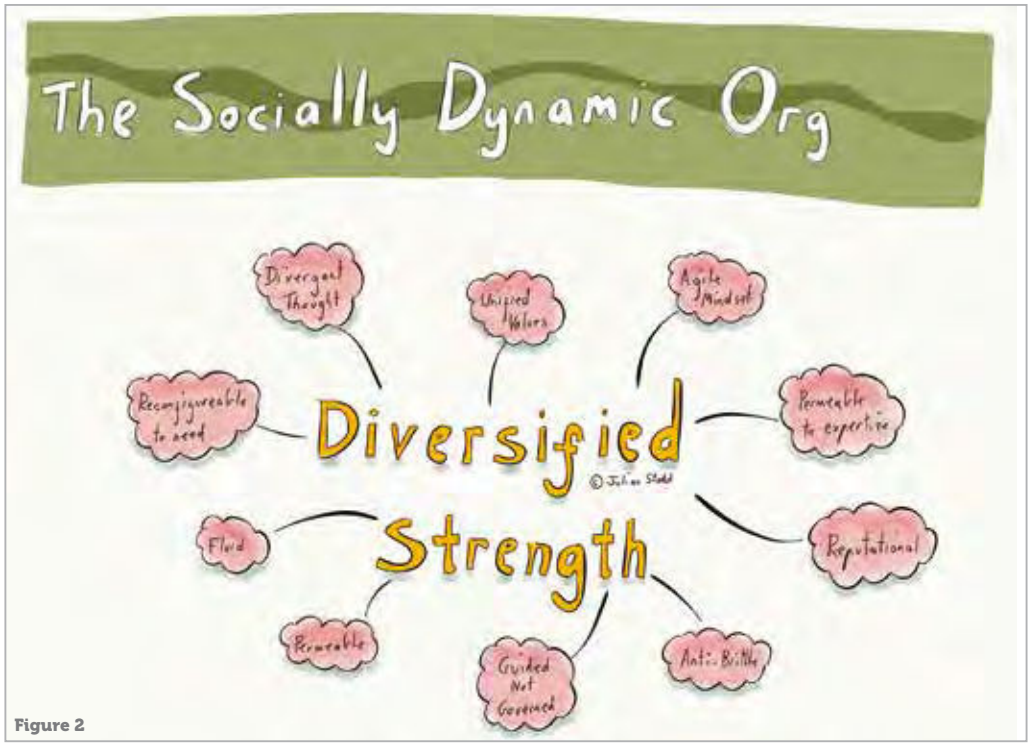
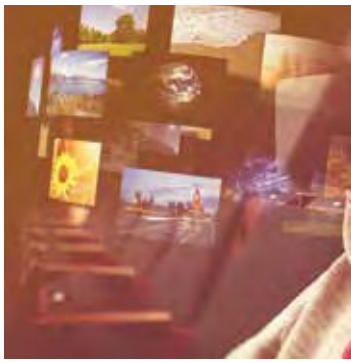


Figure 2



The Socially Dynamic Organisation will be guided, not simply governed. It will see that risk is a fuel for change and not just a black hole to be avoided.

Innovation is really an output from the Dynamic system but it sits here, at the central space, because it will be a feature of our new organisation: a natural home for creativity, an ability to innovate, not for special occasions but as part of our everyday capability.

Innovation will be commonplace within a Socially Dynamic Organisation and expertise will lie not in owning and controlling it but in a wise methodology and approach to let us hear weak signals, to gently nurture tender shoots. Innovation is a boiling energy that can be nurtured or provoked: if we build the right organisation around us, we will become able to hear, to access, this energy. But only if we create the conditions.

Finally, Leadership sits as the sixth central aspect of the Socially Dynamic Organisation: specifically, its ability to balance both formal and Social Leadership: formal authority being that which is given to us by the organisation, within a hierarchy and Social being the reputation-based authority that we earn within our communities. Social Leadership is the oil in the machine: it flows through and around the formal aspects of the organisation and both unblocks and speeds up our ability to be agile.

I am going to play further with this structure, which I will likely use in a book on "change", which explores how organisations change and why we must build the Socially Dynamic Organisation to thrive in times of constant change.

Our widest challenge is one of Organisational Design: many of our organisations are built upon principles of power and control that are simply outdated in the Social Age. As technology iterates ever faster, as social constructs evolve rapidly to utilise this democratised power, as pressure mounts for organisations to be fairer, more equal and socially responsible, we need new organising principles to work from, and the work around the Socially Dynamic Organisation will remain my evolving attempt to capture that design.

Social Leadership is the oil in the machine: it flows through and around the formal aspects of the organisation and both unblocks and speeds up our ability to be agile

https://julianstodd.wordpress.com/2016/09/15/an-overview-of-the-socially-dynamic-organisation/

What if you had satellite navigation – for everything?

Nick Shackleton-Jones

There's a popular saying *What got you here, won't get you there*. Today this is nowhere as true as it is in training.

The world of courses, competencies and certification is rapidly evaporating – replaced by a new ecosystem of resources, guidance and ratings. As automation advances it consumes the world of learning. Where people work in partnership with technology, it is usually knowledge that is the first target for digitisation.

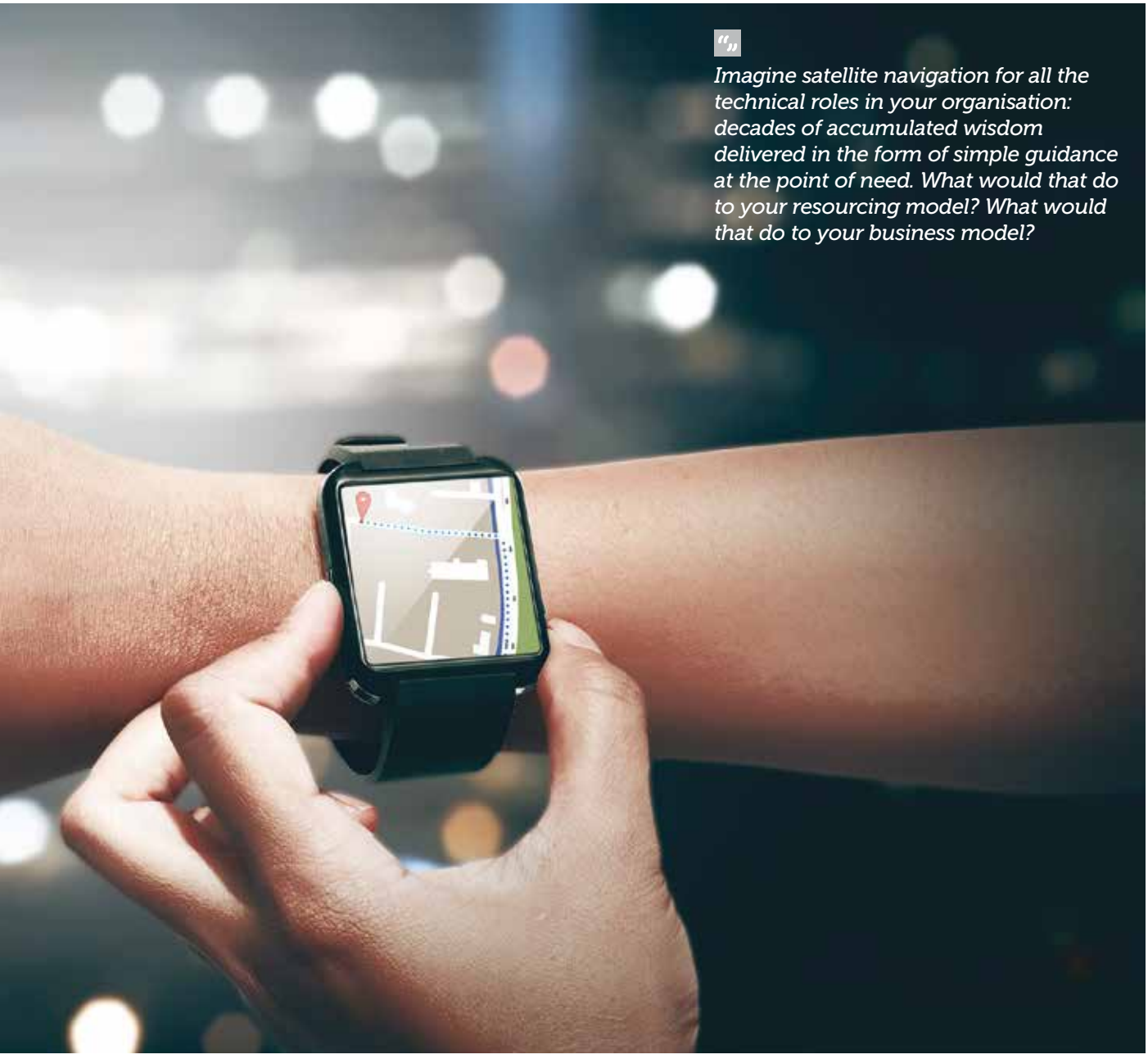
As a starting point, consider the role that technology has played in our everyday lives: when we drive to an unfamiliar place we no longer worry about memorising the route – we simply type in the destination and our satellite navigation does the rest. I no longer have a map in the back of my car, and I have stopped worrying that my daughter doesn't know how to read one.

And there is a much broader significance than people realise. Uber could not exist were it not for satellite navigation. In London, for example, black cab drivers are required to pass "The Knowledge" – a gruelling certification requiring people to learn every route in the city – a process which can take many years and which produces an elite tier of technical experts who command a certain rate of pay.

It is satellite navigation – not Uber – that disrupts this *status quo* by ensuring that anyone with a basic level of capability can perform as well as (and sometimes better than) the expert.

Now imagine satellite navigation for all the technical roles in your organisation: decades of accumulated wisdom delivered in the form of simple guidance at the point of need. What would that do to your resourcing model? What would that do to your business model?

Many of us will be tired of hearing about automation, so instead I would like to talk about



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Digital Age Learning

What if you had satellite navigation – for everything?

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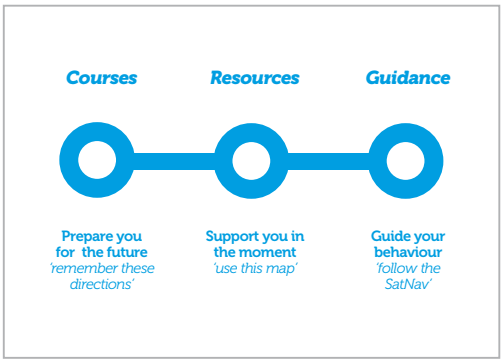
Figure 1



the roadmap to automation: the distinct developmental stages that will transform your business and employee performance in the future. It is a simple model, and I have sketched it above. It reflects not only the future of learning but how we will support performance and transform capability over the coming decades.

Today a good deal of capability is underpinned by learning in the form of courses. People take courses, gain certifications and then perform to the expected standard. But of course this is a fairy-tale – the learning process itself is hugely inefficient with almost all information conveyed during courses lost shortly thereafter. In practice people do what they need to pass the tests and then undertake most of their real learning on the job.

This state-of-affairs may be OK in a world where we accept that it will take our new starters six months to a year to "get up to speed" by learning from colleagues with 20 years' experience – but in a world where people change jobs rapidly, where the numbers of highly experienced staff are dwindling, the ineffectiveness of the model is exposed like a shipwreck at low tide. In my previous organisation, one technical learning path lasted 10 years. Today it is unlikely anyone will ever complete such a path. So what is a better solution than courses? Resources.

> *The delegates hadn't bothered actually learning an installation, instead they had worked together to create a simple checklist of steps, a few pages long. They would follow the checklist and – if they hit a problem – phone a friend. They had replaced the course with a resource*

About 20 years ago my team were asked to develop e-learning modules to reduce the length of a classroom-based course in which field-based telecommunications engineers were trained in the installation of a new PABX (Private Area Branch Exchange) switch. The new product would be available for installation in six months' time and the engineers were being trained in preparation.

But the course was five days long and a considerable expense so the company was looking into e-learning. But before converting the content to digital format I suggested one of my team attend the course. After he had attended the five-day course I asked him what the delegates were doing.

"Sleeping, mainly", he replied. It turns out that they would get together in the evenings, then sleep through the terribly dull, boring lectures in the knowledge that they would be presented with a huge installation manual at the end of the course, which they would place in the back of the car, then the back of the shelf and never open.

You might wonder how they would complete an actual installation. They had solved this problem. Since they were unlikely to undertake an installation for several months there really was no point in paying attention in class, as almost all the information would be forgotten in a few weeks' time. Instead they had worked together to create a simple checklist of steps, a few pages long. They would follow the checklist and – if they hit a problem – phone a friend. They had replaced the course with a resource.

That resources can be far more effective than courses at supporting performance is a point made by Atul Gawande in his book *The Checklist Manifesto* in which he reports that in environments ranging from aviation to clinical settings a checklist significantly outperforms training at a fraction of the cost and time.

The important thing to understand about resources is that they are not learning – they are performance support. In effect, they reduce the investment required in learning to achieve the same performance outcome. An everyday example would be the London Underground map. I don't memorise it – but it helps me get from one place to another.

It is this approach that my team applied, many times, in a large multi-national oil and gas company. In the first instance we considered replacing the eight-hour e-learning component of the induction programme. The modules were dull, disliked and disused. We spent time with people who had recently joined the company, understanding their challenges and the resources we might create to help them overcome those challenges – such as advice from peers, checklists, guides, infographics and short videos.

The results were dramatic and unprecedented: the "new starter" site rapidly became the most heavily used content site anywhere in the organisation, with over a million visits in the ensuing four years. People used it because it was useful. Our design process (Fig 2 overleaf) was distinct in that it placed the user at the heart of the design, with the result that we focused less on "dumping content" and more on building useful digital stuff. We designed with the audience *for* the audience – and they loved the results.

Everything that we designed in this way was hugely over-subscribed. Not only did they like and use the resources we produced, they reported reduced time to autonomy, greater clarity of purpose and feeling better supported during their transition into the organisation.

But how would this approach be extended to technical roles?

One particular challenge the organisation was facing was a "V-shaped demographic", a large number of very experienced people leaving the organisation at the same time as large numbers of younger, relatively inexperienced people were joining. There was enormous pressure on experienced advisers to transfer their knowledge to newcomers and the classroom model just wasn't working.

We were asked to tackle a specific "knowledge management" problem: the organisation had identified a technical expert soon to leave. When we spoke to our expert it was clear that his expectation was that we would simply film his standard technical lecture so that, in the event people had several hours to spare, they could watch it on a mobile device.

What if you had satellite navigation – for everything?

Nick Shackleton-Jones

This would have been a bad idea. An equally bad idea would have been to break this eight-hour lecture into five-minute chunks. The content does not become more useful by breaking it into smaller pieces. So instead we developed resources: we gathered together the target audience, the kinds of people who attended our expert's lectures, and asked what challenges do you face? What kinds of everyday problems do you have to tackle? What are the top five questions you would want to ask Fred?

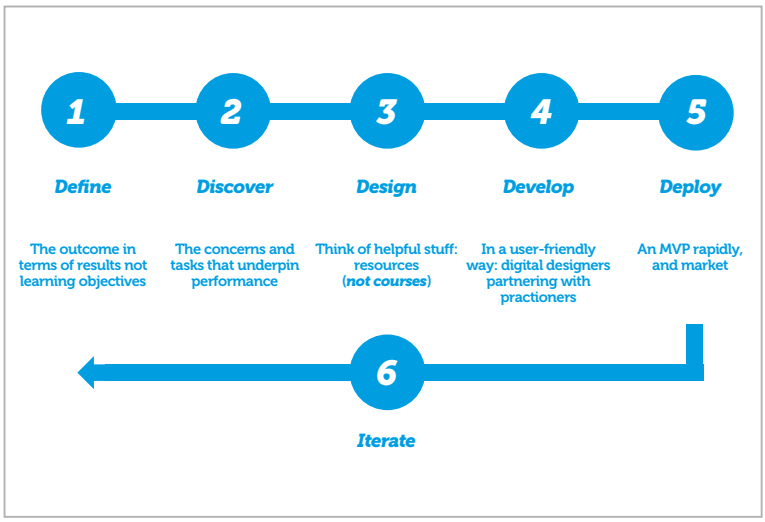
We then put these questions to our expert and captured the responses to specific task-related challenges. Questions like How do you stop X happening? or What's the best way to do Y? We captured the responses as short videos but we could just as easily have created one-page guides or checklists.

So instead of producing chunks of learning content we produced useful resources: stuff that people could use to solve real-world problems, developing their capability on the job with expert support delivered via their own mobile device. The secret to developing effective performance support is to consider things from the perspective of the learner's context rather than the expert's content.

Shifting from courses to resources is the immediate opportunity for organisations to improve performance without a costly investment in learning or capability. Indeed, the future success of many organisations will depend on their ability to maintain or improve performance whilst keeping capability requirements to a minimum. Clearly, automation represents the ultimate destination, but I would like to discuss the step between resources and automation: guidance (se Fig 1, previous page).

Guidance is simply a context-sensitive resource. If you stop a person to ask for directions and they draw you a map, this is a helpful resource – but you will still need to figure out where you are on the map. Satnav does not merely present us with a map, instead it says "turn left" or "turn right" because it knows where we are on the map.

Figure2



Picture a future in which performance is a hybrid of technology and employee, a future in which technical procedures are guided by wearable devices. Whilst this may sound like a 2025 vision, simple forms of guidance can be realised today – after all, many people already wear fitness trackers which monitor activity and provide context-sensitive recommendations.

In one organisation we developed "Satnav for leaders". Leadership is increasingly important to organisations as they realise that key variables, such as performance, engagement or safety incidents, are strongly influenced by human factors – especially the quality of leadership.

The leadership app that we developed monitored leadership performance on a weekly basis, providing feedback based on a number of variables closely related to employee engagement. By monitoring leaders across specific behaviours it was able to give reliable prompts to leaders regarding specific ways in which their leadership could be improved – and monitor the results!

You may be anxious at the thought of organisations gathering large amounts of data about employee activities in order to be able to provide specific, context-sensitive guidance to people in order to improve their performance.

> ***Instead of producing chunks of learning content we produced useful resources: stuff that people could use to solve real-world problems, developing their capability on the job with expert support delivered via their own mobile device***

While a move towards the "quantified employee" seems inevitable, there is a more positive side to this development: gamification. In essence, recognition is the flip side of quantification. The organisation wants tracking, the employee wants recognition. Both desires can be satisfied by the same data set.

Though there is much confusion about the term "gamification", its most important function is to incentivise positive behaviours by providing immediate recognition – much as resources improve performance by providing immediate support.

Gamification may also be more in tune with the expectations of new employees.

When we were asked to construct a solution for new graduate hires, we began by clarifying their expectations of learning. In common with other demographics, they expressed a desire for relevant content, useful in context – but they also expressed an expectation for a system that allowed them to participate and to receive instant feedback.

Our platform therefore included a number of "gamified" elements -in which people were encouraged to contribute, recommend, comment and share – and received points, badges, and a position on a leader board related to their activity.

In summary, organisations have suffered from flawed thinking: assuming that learning builds capability and capability drives performance. The future will belong to organisations that understand how to support and guide performance directly while keeping their dependence on capability to a minimum.

If we change our perspective, however, the opportunities to improve employee performance and experience have never been greater:

- ***Shift your focus from courses to resources***, things that will actually help an employee accomplish some specific, everyday task. These resources do not necessarily have to be digital or available on mobile devices – checklists and one-page guides are both simple to produce and more effective than training.
- ***Involve your audience in the design of materials*** – only by being user-centric can we arrive at an effective solution design. Our 5Di process is intended to provide a tried and tested framework for people wanting to develop solutions that audiences will welcome.
- ***Use gamification to offer your employees recognition***, for the things you wish to track. Gamification can help balance the value proposition by providing organisations with a rich source of data, in return for recognition, feedback and reputational value.

Nick Shackleton-Jones is the Director of the Learning and Performance Improvement service at PA Consulting

10 Reasons for Social Leadership

Julian Stodd

As we move ever further into the Social Age, those mechanisms of power and control that got us this far will not be enough to get us the rest of the way: alongside hierarchy and system, we need community and trust, and those will be earned through developing strong Social Leadership as a counterpoint and complement to formal aspects of power.

Why Social Leadership? Here are 10 reasons:

1. For Innovation

Formal systems are good at codifying and repeating things in a safe way but can be less good at disruption, free thinking and challenge. An innovative company has to hold a dynamic tension between what it knows to do today and what it may achieve tomorrow, and this tension is held between its formal and social spaces. To be truly innovative, I'd argue that an organisation needs to be truly socially dynamic: able to deploy communities, social filtering of ideas, as well as more traditional abilities to exploit the best ideas. But you cannot have an ability to exploit at scale if you don't have an environment where the ideas are generated, filtered and prototyped, and it is only with Social Authority and leadership that we can create the conditions for this to occur.

2. For Agility

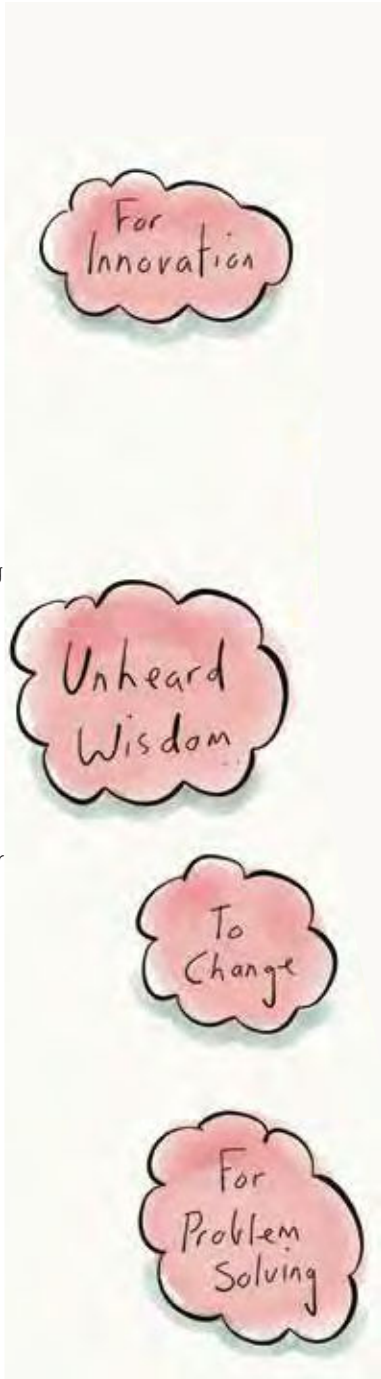
Agile organisations solve problems today but retain an ability to solve them differently tomorrow. It is this diversified strength that lies at the heart of a Socially Dynamic organisation. Agility may be supported by technology, by system and process but it's fundamentally about mindset and interpersonal interaction. By developing strong layers of Social Leadership we can best set conditions for this to occur.

3. For Sense Making

The sense-making ability of high-functioning communities lies at the heart of the adapted organisation and the potential of Social Leaders. Sense making is about filtering, about new knowledge, about the telling and re-telling of stories, about finding areas of commonality and difference, about prototyping implementation and sharing experience. It's what communities do when they are operating at their best and the role of Social Leaders is to help them to operate at their best. Strong sense-making capability is the return for investing in Social Leadership.

4. For Healthy Communities

Nurturing, trusting, engaged and dynamic communities sit at the heart of the Socially Dynamic organisation but we cannot take them for granted. They are the result of high Social Capital, fair policies and accountability, and earned trust. If communities are dysfunctional or simply operational, we don't get this benefit. Social Leaders are able to operate in community spaces from within. Formal leaders can only operate from outside. If we try to impose formal power in social spaces, it simply makes them formal.



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5. To Earn Trust

Trust between individuals and organisations is earned through a consistency of response over time. There is no shortcut: we have to be fair, to be just, to be considerate and to lead with humility to earn this trust. But once we have it, engagement is easier. Trust can never be taken for granted: as hard as it is to earn it, it is easy to lose. Social Leaders gain their power from Reputation, earned within community: it is a form of authority imbued upon them by the community and embodies trust.

6. For Fairness

The Socially Dynamic organisation will be fair in word and deed and by doing so it will attract the best talent and create the conditions for that talent to thrive. Fairness cannot be assured by formal systems: it can only be lived through experience that crosses through both formal and social spaces. Fairness is something we can work towards if we use appropriate frameworks to listen and learn from our communities and if we are willing to constantly adapt. Fairness is not something we impose on a community system; it is something we are judged against through our organisational actions.

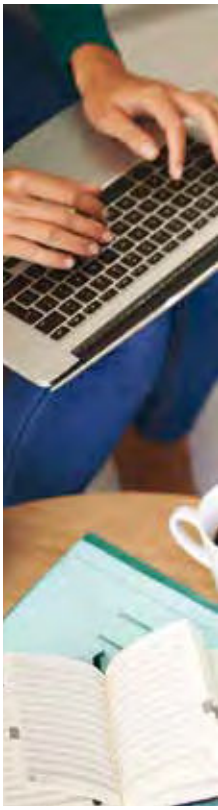
"The Socially Dynamic organisation is so powerful, because it has abandoned its Victorian reliance on system, process and control in favour of a fluid adaptability based upon trusted community, individual agency and amplification through social filtering

7. To Grow

To grow an organisation, we need both formal and social leadership because growth requires both infrastructure and community. No one form of power can give you both.

8. For Problem Solving

The Social Age provides ever more complex challenges, not just within known and existing markets but in emergent spaces as the very business models and markets we are familiar with change and grow. To solve problems effectively, we need to hear a wide range of voices, to be open to a wide range of challenges and solutions. That's why the Socially Dynamic organisation is so powerful, because it has abandoned its Victorian reliance on system, process and control in favour of a fluid adaptability based upon trusted community, individual agency and amplification through social filtering. All empowered by Social Leaders.



9. To Change

At the heart of the Dynamic Change Framework that I have shared recently is the difference between "Constrained" and "Dynamic" organisations. Constrained ones are willing, but fundamentally unable to relinquish control. They seek to maintain control of stories and impose their will upon a community, instead of learning from that community. By contrast, Dynamic organisations have restricted the vertical mechanisms of control to be facilitating and fluid. They are agile by design, able to change and change again without getting breathless.

10. For Unheard Wisdom

In formal spaces, we hear heard and permitted wisdom. In social spaces, we can have the privilege of hearing the unheard wisdom, which may be precisely what we need to be hearing. But I say "privilege" because we have to earn the right to hear it. Formal leadership can only operate in formal spaces: with strong Social Leadership we may get to hear the unheard wisdom that we need to hear.

These are only 10 aspects of Social Leadership, 10 reasons we need to be open to new models of authority and power. In the Social Age, only the truly agile can thrive; our role is to help our organisations adapt to this new dynamic, and Social Leadership is one aspect of that. Power through community: fluid, co-created, adaptive and responsive. And, above all, fair.

The Social Leadership Handbook, by Julian Stodd, is available now: https://seasaltlearning.com/social-leadership-handbook-second-edition/

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Steps on the way to omni-learning

Peppe Auricchio

Corporate learning's transformation is being announced across all channels, and with increasing vociferousness. Practitioners and experts alike warn that the way employees learn today is nothing like the learning of old – and hence, that disruption is upon us. This disruption, they say, concerns both the learning experience *and* the learning function.

Digitalisation is allowing learners to resolve old needs in fundamentally new ways – and hence alter their learning experience. For example, learners no longer need to keep formal and informal learning separate; they can link the two via platforms that capture all their learning moments - in whatever context they occur. Likewise, learners need not put up with "one size fits all" interventions that vaguely meet their needs; adaptive learning tools use data to "personalise" the learning experience, by suggesting future activity based on past interactions as well as peer recommendations.

L&D teams must adapt to the implications of these changes. Continuous, data-driven learning requires a dramatic change in the way they provide learning. Rather than defining programmes and administering them, today's reality requires a capability to support employees' engagement with their learning – wherever and whenever it occurs. As a result, L&D must transition from being a visible "function" with responsibility over learning interventions, to an invisible "dimension" charged with creating the conditions for learning to flourish "naturally" (ie for a learning culture to take root).

Dealing with this reality is no easy task. Especially if one considers the other drivers, in addition to digitalisation, that are influencing the

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landscape that is emerging. These include new realities in learners' jobs as well as changing skills requirements. The "talent tsunami" generated by these forces is radically changing companies' expectations of learningand doing so at an ever-increasing speed. Learning professionals must not only understand these forces, but also rethink their tasks and responsibilities because of their impact and develop the capabilities that new routines require.

For a Chief Learning Officer (CLO) the kind of transformation required is both strategic and organisational in its nature. What that means is a CLO must first define a vision of what the organisation is becoming and what it should be doing, and then drive an orchestrated set of initiatives in support of that vision. For CLOs to be successful in this ambition, they require certain ingredients – from top-management support to streamlined decision-making capability to a substantial budget allocation.

Might this simply be too much to ask for, especially over a short period? For some CLOs, that may certainly be the case. Research[1] reveals that several organisations are still struggling to put in place the foundations for a new learning environment. This includes everything from implementing a new digital platform to developing (or acquiring) skills within the L&D team. Without these basics in place, a wholescale transformation may be an unreasonable ask. So what is an alternative approach? CLOs should consider "stretch" experiments.

A "stretch" strategy uses targeted experimentation to develop new organisational competencies. This experimentation, in green fields or in existing business activity, can over time produce change that is more widespread and so lead to transformation. However, in the short-term CLOs can use "stretch" experiments to learn about unfamiliar solutions. If these solutions prove successful, they can then be scaled to

1. Auricchio, Giuseppe, "A study of the views of senior learning and development professionals in flagship global companies regarding their use of blended learning in executive leadership development programs" (2014).

Digital Age Learning

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capture greater value; if nothing comes of them, little harm has been done – and the learning in and of itself is of value.

The key to successful experimentation is selecting a good context. A good context is a contained environment that allows testing of specific elements of a solution. Through user involvement, this testing becomes an integral part of the design and development of a new solution. Within the scope of activities of a traditional L&D team, there is one such context – and that is a formal learning experience, or more simply put a "programme". Indeed, programmes are ideal platforms through which assess the impact from the use of new modes and methodologies and ask learners for buy-in before eventual adoption.

One would think that in the era of digitalisation, experimentation with new approaches is rampant. The reality is that for all the talk about EdTech and the pressure to offer something fresh, there has not been significant application of digital learning for senior and mid-level leaders. Findings from a study sponsored by UNICON (*The Use of Blended Learning in Executive Education: The Voice of the Learner*; Auricchio, Frazer, Prouty-McLaren; 2017) suggest that corporate L&D teams are hesitant experimenters. Across over 20 programmes profiled, the study found little variance in how traditional methodologies (coaching, action learning) were deployed. Furthermore, in these programmes the use of online learning was extremely limited; indeed, most programmes lacked a digital infrastructure of any kind.

The data collected suggests that L&D professionals like to stay close to what they do best; in other words, use known "tools of the trade" to craft solutions that fit what they believe to be learners' needs. It also confirms that what they do best is facilitate face-to-face learning. In other words, the hype about "blended learning" is just that: the use of online learning in combination with face-to-face learning has yet to live up to its promise in a corporate context. Might this failure be an opportunity? Perhaps, if CLOs can use the aggressive pursuit of blended learning as an excuse to experiment with new approaches; wetting their feet in the pool commonly referred to as "digital-age learning".

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For this hope to be satisfied, CLOs and their teams must embrace a new approach when designing formal learning experiences. Today's "digital learning" does not simply mean a shift in tools; it is a shift toward learner-centric design. To capture the opportunity digitalisation offers, L&D practitioners must look at learner needs as a source of inspiration for new approaches. In other words, they must be open to meeting old needs in new ways.

Unfortunately, acquiring this flexibility is hard; the temptation to revert to an existing toolkit is strong, in any profession. Yet resisting that temptation is critical to create programmes that are optimal *from the point of view of the learner*. L&D professionals must engage in the design process with a key question in mind: "what is important to the learner?". By thinking about the learner's pains (and gains), they can then explore how to best address these – *given the tools available to us today*. This process of rediscovering needs and questioning how to solve them in our current context is what can produce learning experiences that are novel because it opens the door to leveraging the possibilities of today's connected, data-driven world.

Perhaps an example is useful to illustrate the potential of this approach. One of the well-known objectives for attending a programme is to engage with a network of peers. Until recently, this network was typically established and developed mostly during face-to-face time. This was justified by learning designers with the excuse that face-to-face interactions are uniquely suited to building relationships. While that may be true in part… can we break this need down into what is important to the learner, and address these pains and gains in a different way today – given the tools at our disposal?

What a learner values, in the process of networking, is varied. At the very start of a programme, participants are curious to find out more about each other – some basic information about work, nationality, family, interests, etc. of their fellow learners. During the program, participants seek data about how the network is developing; who they have met, who the influencers are, who can provide them with useful resources. Following its completion, participants are anxious about maintaining the relationships they have established.

In most programmes, these aspects of networking are addressed poorly, or not at all. But by being open to the possibility of new ways to satisfy them, effective solutions emerge. For example, fellow participants can meet before they do so in the flesh by engaging online in "meet and greet" exercises. Additionally, network diagnostics can help participants assess their network, and map that to the people in their programme. Finally, a social community can extend interaction beyond a program's completion.

Adopting these simple solutions is technically easy; indeed, even conceptually they seem trivial. However, dong so systematically requires L&D teams to leave the "product and service box" they occupy, and move to the "needs to be served box". By identifying new solutions to solve what is most important to the learner, L&D teams can run experiments that allow them to gradually develop the capabilities needed to enable digital-age learning. While these experiments can be challenging, perhaps for many they are a less daunting starting point to unleashing the power of digitalisation.

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