

Contribution of learning to change and transformation

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Introduction

In this session we discussed the importance of learning and change in organizational transformation.

To start the discussion, Melanie gave a short presentation highlighting that successful change involves both achieving tangible benefits (like new systems or products) and ensuring a positive experience for those affected. Achieving tangible benefits ensures that the business case underpinning the change is met, but if there is a poor experience, these benefits can be undermined. A poor experience during change triggers operational risks including employee turnover or disengagement.

Insights into Learning

The presentation includes insights from a book on neuroscience and change, emphasising the importance of training for both new ways of working and coping with change. This dual focus helps build organizational capability and a supportive learning culture. Melanie shares that senior leaders are increasingly recognising the strategic value of developing this organisational capability for change. Effectively, this lifts their responsibilities for sponsoring change above a single change, demonstrating that successful sponsorship contributes to the wider strategic goals of an organisation that can innovate and transform.

She quotes statistics from the CIPD learning at work report 2023 to underline the importance of learning for employee retention and organisational connection. Melanie concludes by outlining the risks of neglecting learning during change, such as fostering cynicism and slowing progress.

The meeting then moves into a breakout room session where participants discuss barriers to learn during change, whether related to finances, time, or recognition of importance. The aim is to gather collective insights before proceeding with the session.

Barriers to Learning During Change:

Operational issues:

- **Time Constraints:** Participants are often too busy with operational activities to engage in training.
- **Budget Issues:** Insufficient funding for necessary training can be a significant barrier.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** Lack of baseline knowledge of existing processes and the necessary skills for the new way of working.
- **Involvement in Design:** It's crucial to have the right people involved in designing the learning experience.

- External vs. Internal Trainers: External trainers may lack sufficient business context, while internal trainers might not have the expertise to deliver effective training.

Senior Leadership Engagement:

- Some senior leaders fail to see the value of learning experiences and their impact on change.
- Articulating Benefits: It's important to convey the business benefits of learning and change to senior leaders.

Effective Learning Practices:

- Relevant Training: Training should be practical and related to the participants' work to be effective.
- Engagement and Ownership: Employees should feel involved in the change process and own their learning journey.
- Integration into Daily Work: Learning should be linked to immediate, practical applications in the workplace.

Learning Culture and Motivation:

- Developing Careers: Learning opportunities should support employees' career development and empowerment.
- Change Management as a Durable Skill: Emphasising the long-term value of change management skills.
- Curiosity and Confidence: Fostering curiosity and confidence as foundational elements for learning.

Design Principles for Effective Learning:

- Autonomy: Allowing learners to access training when they need it.
- Relevance and Context: Ensuring the training content is relevant and contextually appropriate.
- Engagement and Practicality: Designing learning experiences that are engaging and solve immediate problems.

Creating effective learning design

We returned to the main session where Melanie proposed ideas for effective learning design, emphasising creating a "pull" mechanism that encourages people to engage in learning. The discussion is based on principles such as making learning compact, relevant, practical, tailored, real, and accessible.

From the breakout rooms, the group defined the following design principles:

The key points from the session include:

- Relevance to Need: Learning should be directly relevant to the learners' needs.
- Variety of Methods: Use diverse methods, including bite-sized chunks, to make learning sticky and memorable.
- Bring Own Experience: Learners should be able to relate sessions to their own experiences.
- Follow-up for Embedding Learning: Action plans and reflection time are crucial.

- Co-creation: Learners should be involved in designing their learning experiences.
- Importance of Reflection: Reflection should be built into learning experiences as this is critical for brain health, as we need time to reset and reflect if we are to process everything we have learnt, consolidate this new information, build links with existing information, and develop insights.
- Processing Time: Allow time for processing information and provide activities to facilitate this.
- Purposeful Reflection Tasks: These tasks should be relevant and memorable.
- Avoid Overloading: Do not present too much information at once and avoid simultaneous reading and listening.
- Real Scenarios: Use scenarios connected to daily activities for practical application.
- Continuous Collaboration: Establish communities for ongoing collaboration and learning post-training.
- Variety and Engagement: the importance of engaging methods, real-life application, and maintaining learning communities to ensure continued learning and practical application.

The session concludes with Melanie encouraging the integration of these principles to create an effective and engaging learning environment that supports continuous improvement and practical application.

Book the [next session](#), which is focused on co-creation of a Benefits Management Strategy