

## **Accelerating the development of learning organizations: Shifting paradigms from current practice to human performance improvement**

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**Abstract.** *Organizations can become engines of growth, satisfaction and contribution. A learning organization is able to scan, adapt as needed to a changing environment. It can identify current and anticipated performance gaps, determine root causes, then design and implement solutions to produce business results.*

*That's the idea and ideal. In practice, there tends to be a significant gap in consistently realizing this scenario. The technology of human performance improvement (HPI) has the models that can deliver on this promise. This paper discusses two examples of HPI interventions that enable improved performance: knowledge management systems (KMS) and coaching, with case study examples.*

**Keywords:** learning organization, knowledge management systems, coaching, human performance improvement, transformational learning.

**JEL Classification:** O31.

## 1. Introduction

If ever there was a need for fresh eyes and an enhanced set of models and practices for organizations and their current and possible impact on economic well-being (large or small), now is the time. We live in a world of increasing and accelerating volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014; Bergquist and Mura, 2005). This is happening across many domains: economic, political, technological, and scientific, as well as institutional and relational. Many of our traditional, modern ways of thinking, understanding and doing are poor matches for what's needed to be effective now and to lay foundation for a sustainable future. Not only must we learn new skills and be able to apply them well and appropriately in different situations (Bergquist and Mura, 2005; Connor, 1998; Stout-Rostron, 2014). We also have an imperative to learn how to learn as an ongoing capacity and capability that can enable us to diagnose, create, and adapt iteratively (Johansen, 2012). At the same time, we also must get wiser (better) at adopting and implementing the principles already demonstrated about what can produce efficiency, effectiveness, engagement and commitment for the people who we ask to do the work.

Closing this learning gap and its related performance is as critical for our organizations as it is for us as individuals. Old ways of leading (command-and-control), managing (coercive, judgmental/blaming, fear-based) and thinking (reactive, risk and change averse) about the way to organize work (emphasizing only efficiency, viewing people as an instrumental means to financial ends, conceptualizing business as primarily profit maximizing) have proven to be inefficient, unable to adapt and maintain competitive advantage, and contributed to degradation of the environment and community. There are new paradigms and models, including some that have been around for 25 or 50 years, that can profoundly impact organizational effectiveness, worker engagement, capability building, and business's economic and social impacts on society. At the heart is aligning and connecting strategy to a higher, societal purpose and vision for organizational work, reconnecting with and committing to people and valuing their participation and contributions as an organization's competitive advantage, even exercising the ambition to discover and implement a set of principles and practices that can enable engaged, committed people and sustainable high performance.

## 2. The power of organizations as economic engines

Nations (and their governments) pass and implement laws, regulations, and policies, set standards, and provide incentives and subsidies that create a climate and context in which businesses must operate and adapt. Not all segments of a society are equally served through these actions; some populations tend to be disadvantaged and underserved. They nevertheless are in need of goods and services. New business models have created the opportunity to serve them, moving away from the principle of profit-maximizing business. Kaufman's megaplanning model (see, for example, Kaufman, et al., 2003) has challenged traditional, short-term bottom-line oriented management and process-focused performance improvement thinking and practice. It has been successfully applied to government and for profit organizations in different countries over two decades. Consistent with this shift, businesses (such as Amazon, Whole Foods Market and

Southwest Airlines in the US, the Tata Group in India) organized on the principles of *conscious capitalism* (Mackay and Sisodia, 2007) integrate caring for all stakeholders, establish a higher purpose expressed as a societal benefit, and translate that stance into their corporate strategy, mission, vision and values. Other, *social, businesses* (such as Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, iCow in Kenya, Tugende in Uganda and Al Majmoua in Lebanon) have organized to be socially responsible in ways that reduce poverty and create wealth (Prahalad, 2006; Yunus, 2007).

Bernardez (2005, p. 37) states that “empirical evidence and recent revisions of conventional business doctrine indicate that companies that actively promote social performance and develop their clients’ markets and skills as a part of business strategy have a better chance of achieving sustainable profitability and growth than those that do not.” This may require taking a different, more systemic, approach to the intersection of business and markets. He observes, “Socially-focused business strategies not only apply to large companies or at the larger macroeconomic level, but also to smaller businesses facing the challenge of succeeding in new, underdeveloped markets and communities.” (p. 43) Bernardez cites successful examples of multi-year businesses/communities pilot projects in Argentina, Panama, and Mexico (Bernardez, 2005; Bernardez, et al., 2007).

Recent research (Dowdy and Van Reenen, 2014) across more than 14,000 companies in 30 countries has indicated that badly managed companies exist in all countries and across all sectors. In contrast, “well-managed firms have higher productivity, market value, growth, and ability to survive adverse conditions.” On average, multinationals tend to be the most productive companies, wherever they operate and without regard for country of origin. By their nature, multinationals invest in improving their employees’ skills, rotate key managers, and impact broader economies when people move and start their own businesses.

The leadership of the CEO and the culture she/he fosters is an important factor in making strategic decisions, engaging the workforce, and producing successful, potentially sustainable, enterprises (Dunham, 2009). For example, Snowden and Boone (2007) have identified four market conditions (characterized as simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic), each requiring its own tactics, timing and expectations. They state, “A deep understanding of context, the ability to embrace complexity and paradox, and a willingness to flexibly change leadership style will be required for leaders who want to make things happen in a time of increasing uncertainty.” (p. 76) Chaos and turbulence are also cited by others (for example, Bergquist and Mura, 2005; Fredberg, et al., 2008; Hristache and Iacob, 2012; Johansen, 2012) as important conditions to recognize and reasons to develop adaptive responses. Fredbert, et al. (2008) interviewed 26 current or former CEOs of companies in Europe and North America assessed to be high performing and high commitment. They found that the CEO was highly influential to create the possibility and leverage the commitment for sustainable success by embracing, then resolving, paradoxes. They implemented four strategies to realize the possibility: they earned the trust of their organization through openness to the unvarnished truth; they were deeply engaged with their people through direct, personal exchanges; they mobilized their people around a focused agenda; and they made efforts to build the company’s leadership capabilities through development of strong leaders (Eisenstat et al., 2008).

### 3. Is yours a learning organization?

As tastes, technologies, markets and market dynamics change, so too will organizations need to scan and notice, choose to change as needed, then learn and adapt. The term “learning organization” was coined by Peter Senge almost 25 years ago when he wrote *The Fifth Discipline*. As he points out, many researchers and practitioners had worked on clarifying and refining the five disciplines (personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking) before he wrote the book. He states that the learning organization is one “continually expanding its ability to create its future” (1990, p. 14). More than simply *adaptive learning* that enables an organization to survive, the learning organization also delivers *generative learning* that allows an organization to create. Organizations that focus simply on execution (even if it’s excellent execution) cannot guarantee enduring success in the knowledge economy (Edmondson, 2008). Leadership can also be understood in terms of its ability to generate new internal competencies, sometimes even revolutionary ones, which can disrupt markets and provide clients with a unique customer experience. Often customer learning is required, but that still can be acceptable. Who wants to call (and pay for) a travel agent when Expedia and Travelocity are available (Mariano Bernardez, personal communication, November 7, 2014)?

Garvin (1993) expanded the definition of learning organization: “A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.” Through this process, companies enhance the way they do business to stay ahead of the competition. He posited that learning organizations are skilled at five main activities: systematic problem solving (like using the scientific method); experimentation with new approaches (such as conducting small experiments); learning from their own experience and past history (like capturing lessons learned); learning from experiences and best practices of others (such as benchmarking); and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization (through education or rotating assignments).

Prahalad and Hamel (1990) distinguished the organizational dimension to the learning organization by looking at organizational competencies which are collective, team-based, and externally oriented. Such collective competencies are built (i.e., developed through learning) across functions and departments. They nourish core products which engender business units. They are focused on providing a unique and superior customer experience (through end products and customer services) that adds measurable client value when compared with the existing competition. Garvin, Edmondson and Gino (2008) identified three building blocks for learning organizations:

1. A supportive learning environment (including psychological safety and time for reflection);
2. Concrete learning practices (such as knowledge sharing and experimentation); and
3. Leadership that reinforces learning (by modeling and endorsing active questioning, thoughtful listening and dialogue).

The authors also created a *Learning Organization Survey* to assess relative strength in each of the three domains, as compared against industry benchmarks. Rather than being definitive, the tool is designed to promote reflection, discussion, and further learning.

A survey conducted by Benson-Armer, Otto and Webster (2014) indicated that executives still believe that leadership skills contribute most to their companies' business performance. This is almost twice as true for companies defined as effective capability builders (versus all other respondents). Those companies that built skills most effectively (i.e., through learning) did a better job of linking those skills to performance and to meeting targets, at individual, functional/ departmental, and overall business performance levels. However, the DDI-Conference Board (2014) survey showed that only 40% of organizations say the overall quality of their firm's leadership is high, and only 15% of organizations assess they have a strong bench (p. 5). When companies get leadership right, they are 2.3 times more likely to outperform other companies on financial measures (p. 6). Human capital remains leaders' top challenge, but only 27% reported they were very prepared. Both surveys offer recommendations for how to accelerate and improve their development efforts.

Edmondson (2008) shares those perspectives, suggesting a different mindset is required, one of *execution-as-learning* rather than *execution-as-efficiency*. This point of view emphasizes success over the long haul, rather than maximizing short-haul profits. Leaders set the direction and champion their organization as a learning zone with a willingness to sacrifice short-term efficiency to gain insight and respond to new problems and situations. Employees must learn and apply new knowledge while executing. Managers must empower, ask the right questions, and focus on flexibility to move to a higher form of execution (p. 67). Pfeffer (1997) reviewed the research literature and identified seven high performance management practices, including extensive training/development, which demonstrated profitability gains of up to 40% through people.

#### **4. The paradigm transfer and transformation**

High commitment, high performance companies align their organizational strategies to enhance and enable employees' capability and capacity to complete their work in an efficient manner. Meanwhile, they operate in a dynamic, rapidly changing work environment: changing roles, shifting scope of practice, workforce transformation (e.g., patient records maintained in electronic instead of paper format, virtual collaboration in meetings), etc. To achieve this state, a comprehensive analysis is required to determine the current state of the organization, the vision for the future, and the roadmap to reach the desired state.

Fredberg, et al. (2008) emphasized the management, even reframing, of paradox, which is essential for the leaders who are able to create high commitment and high performance companies. Five groups of managerial practices were introduced that support the transfer and transformation of companies:

1. Confronting reality;
2. Releasing energy;
3. Creating a community of purpose;
4. Amplifying leadership impact; and
5. Shaping the leadership context.

Turning these management practices into reality in a consistent manner represents the trigger for transformation (p. 14). The group also alluded to the importance of aligning the Performance, Psychological, and Adaptability to assist in this process (p. 41). Each element is supported by methods and tools that influence and enable paradigm transfer and transformation for the organization. The focus of this paper is to define the elements that can accelerate the development of learning/knowledge organizations which can become high performing through the application of different perspectives and interventions.

**4a. Understanding learning and knowledge organizations.** A learning organization, similar to a knowledge organization, works with ideas. It generates new ideas, disseminates them throughout the organization, and somehow keeps them whole through its policies, processes, and reviews. It takes the new knowledge as a basis for responding to a changing environment (Garvin, 2008).

Zeppenfeldt (2010) analysed and summarized the research of Prusak, Davenport, Senge and Benett on how organizations can evolve by managing knowledge, as well as on the organizational factors that contribute to success. From their work, he derived the following characteristics of a knowledge organization, one that anticipates and quickly adapts to a changing environment by:

- Absorbing and integrating feedback from partners, suppliers and customers;
- Applying practices that encourage the use of ideas of others and acknowledge the capabilities of employees to improve decision making and organizational effectiveness;
- Working in teams to achieve better and more balanced decision-making and to share knowledge and learning; and
- Eliminating unnecessary processes while maximizing added value.

In other words, the majority of changes that an organization has to go through to become a *knowledge organization* are cultural, but technology can facilitate the process.

**4b. Defining levels of knowledge management and learning organization maturity.** A starting point in the implementation of any (learning or knowledge management) strategy is the measurement of their current programs using Level Maturity Frameworks (e.g., Ontuitive Learning and Performance Impact Maturity Level; APQC Levels of Knowledge Management Maturity, APOC, 2011). After assessment, an organization is assigned an overall maturity rating and suggestions are made about how to advance to the next level.

**4c. Measuring the value of knowledge.** Callahan and Usher (2013) presented the measuring and reporting philosophy of Ernst and Young. This is based on a knowledge overview, measuring and reporting on metrics, and a definition of knowledge Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These can demonstrate efficiency, described in terms of time savings, as an important benefit of a vibrant knowledge culture. The additional positive impacts of a successful knowledge culture included winning new work, improved quality of work, mitigating risk through consistency, greater staff satisfaction, and greater confidence.

**4d. Implementing ADDIE (Assess, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) methodology as a standard when creating learning materials/knowledge assets.** CSTD (2013) provides a quick summary on how to use instructional design competencies

to manage the learning function in an organization: Assessing performance needs in response to a request for learning may result in both non-learning and learning interventions, Designing, Developing structured learning, Effective facilitation of structured learning results in a positive, comfortable, learner-centred environment, where learners share responsibility for the success of the learning event and very important is Supporting the transfer of learning that increases the probability that learners will actually apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

**4e. Aligning the employee performance to the LEADS framework.** The LEADS acronym stands for *Lead* self, *Engage* others, *Achieve* results, *Develop* coalitions, and *System* transformation, which occurs in a Caring Environment Framework. It represents the key skills, behaviours, abilities, and knowledge required to lead in all sectors and levels of a system. It presents a common understanding of what good leadership looks like. This framework was applied in Alberta Health Services (AHS) and aligns with the annual performance appraisal process. Regardless of their role, the employees must be able to lead themselves, engage others, achieve results, develop coalitions, and conduct systems transformation in order to create the Canadian health system of the future (Leads Collaborative).

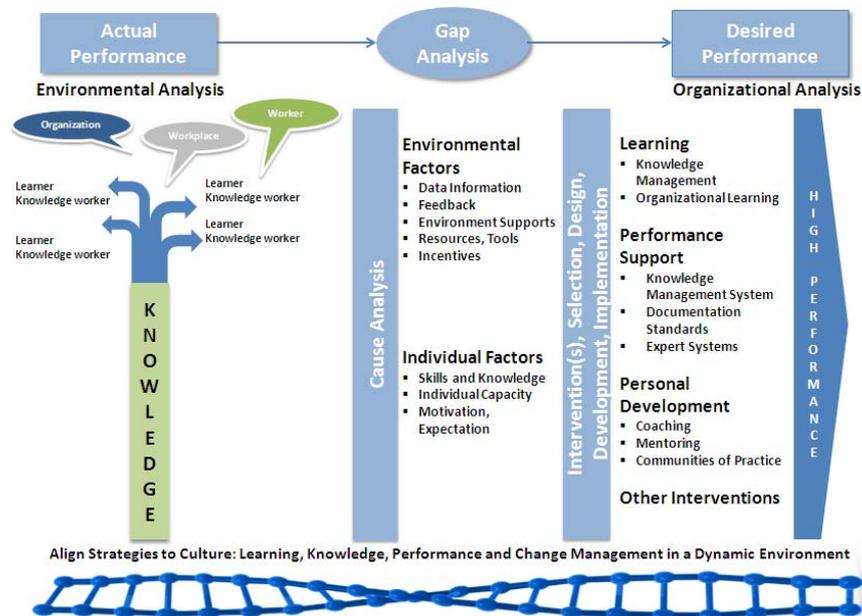
## 5. The HPI framework(s) and principles, and the (kinds of) gaps to be closed

Human Performance Improvement (HPI) is governed by a set of underlying principles that focuses on results, takes a systems view and systematic approach to assessing need, adds value, establishes partnerships, and is neutral in its choice of interventions. Systematic, in fact, refers to many aspects:

- Analysis of the work and workplace to identify the cause or factors that limit performance;
- Design of the solution or specification of the requirements of the solution;
- Development of some or all of the solution and its elements;
- Implementation of the solution; and
- Evaluation of the process and the results.

The systemic identification and removal of barriers to individual and organizational performance was applied to emphasize the Human Performance Improvement framework and gaps to be addressed in the analysis of strategies that would enable the accelerated learning in organizations. The key in this paper is to model the journey through the HPI framework (Addison, Haig and Kearny, 2009; Van Tiem, Moseley and Dessinger, 2012), focusing on analyzing perspectives and approaches at the organization, workplace and worker levels. It provides references to supporting research, case studies and defines a set of interventions (for example, process redesign, work redesign, performance support tools, data access, training, coaching, etc.) that can support a successful implementation that achieves high performance results. A summary of the approach and related elements is graphically represented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Accelerate learning in the organization: Align strategies to culture using an HPI framework



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## 6. HPI intervention example 1: Knowledge management systems and research to support argument

The larger an organization gets, the harder it is to maintain, organize, and disseminate the knowledge it takes for the organization to run effectively and efficiently. Whether an intranet or different knowledge bases are built for employees, Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) focus on making information organized and accessible. Appropriately utilized, a knowledge management solution captures the expertise and experience of the organization. This can reduce the time spent on Research & Development, employee support and training, and access time to find current knowledge assets.

Knowledge Management increases the business benefit within the organization through integrated strategic planning and execution. The need to link knowledge to economic value is greater now than ever. Several factors have to be taken into consideration when analyzing the design of a Knowledge Management System within an organization.

**6a. Knowledge Management as an intangible asset represents the most important asset in an organization.** Recognition of knowledge as a corporate asset is new. Consequently, understanding the need to manage and invest in it requires the same attention as given to tangible assets. The landscape of the organizations and their components (tangible and intangible) demonstrate the shift in the balance between the two in the last 30 years. For example, as of February 14, 2013, Apple was worth USD 438.2 billion. Its tangible assets were valued at USD 127.3 billion and its intangible assets at USD 310.9 billion, 70% of its total value.

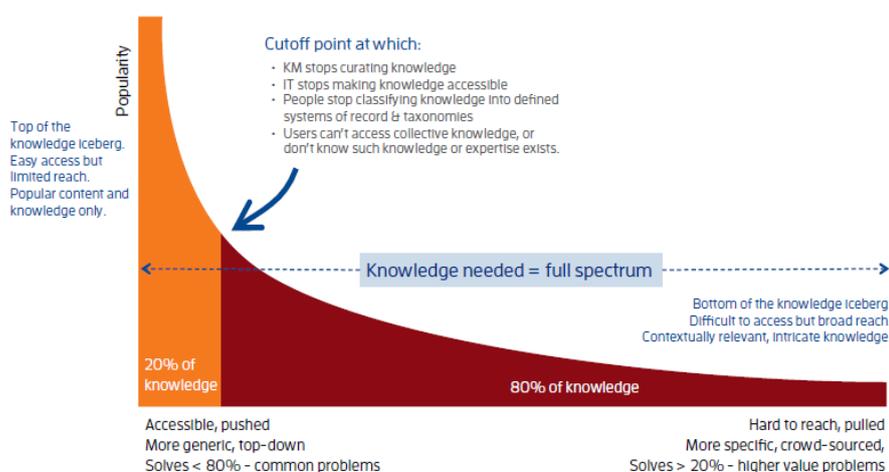
**6b. Knowledge Management and decision making.** The increase in data and information has put significant pressure on strategic decision-makers as well as on employees in order to address daily business needs from both an external and an internal point of view. Finding something that we know exists is challenging enough. It is only the tip of the iceberg compared to not finding valuable information because we simply do not know it exists. Time spent publishing, sharing, searching for and analyzing information, according to IDC analyst firm, costs an organization more than \$50,000 per employee per year of lost productivity (Coveo, 2013a, p.10).

**6c. Knowledge Management and performance.** Knowledge Management is one of the Interventions within an organization once the performance analysis of the need or opportunity is identified. The ISPI (International Society for Performance Improvement) performance technology uses a systematic approach to improving productivity and competence, through the enablement of a set of methods, procedures, and strategy for solving problems.

**6d. Knowledge Management architecture.** Business and knowledge architecture alignment help organizations meet performance targets, achieve organizational goals and objectives, and innovate (Cullen, et al., 2012).

**6e. Knowledge and the human dimension of its creation.** Coveo (2013b) mentions that organizations which have deployed the four elements of transformational knowledge management (Connect, Consolidate, Contextualize, Engage) are able to unlock the hidden value of their collective enterprise knowledge. They tap into the long tail of their collective enterprise knowledge and by bringing it to end users and customers in a way that is pertinent to their specific situation. The Long Tail theory, developed by Anderson (2006), describes the strategy of making available a large number of unique items in small quantities, unconfined by the boundaries of physical systems, departments, or immediate relationships. See **Figure 2**.

**Figure 2.** *The Long Tail of Knowledge. Based on human interaction with information residing among multiple locations unknown to the user*



Coveo (2013b). © 2013b. Coveo. Used with permission.

**6f. Knowledge Management and technology platform.** A playbook-integrated framework can provide a robust basis for analyzing the current Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) and informing the recommended KMS structures. In turn, these could manage business changes from broad organizational transformation to cost reduction, staff/client experience improvement, and alignment with the organization strategic priorities. It serves to focus information/knowledge strategy on business impact (Leganza, Owens and Jedinak, 2014).

The APQC (2013) report, “Transferring and Applying Critical Knowledge, Best Practices Report,” identifies proven practices that enable knowledge to flow in order to help people innovate, collaborate, solve problems, and perform their jobs more effectively. Lessons learned from the best practice organizations (including Accenture, Kraft Foods, NASA, Lockheed Martin, U.S. Department of State, Wipro Ltd., Defense Research and Development Canada, Ernst and Young) showcased common *needs*:

- Identify the knowledge the organization *needs* in order to be successful;
- Document the knowledge so that it is *available* at the right point and when the employees need it;
- Document the *attitudes* towards identifying, capturing, and transferring knowledge requiring systematic processes; and
- Identify *critical knowledge* from experts to pass it on to the next generation and organic processes in which teams and individuals are empowered to share knowledge they believe colleagues would find relevant and valuable.

Success factors in implementing Knowledge Management Systems are discussed by Bechina and Ndlela (2009) in the context of the study of the Amot Municipality in Norway. There, the goal of the public administration was to move towards an innovative e-government. They considered that there were many KM initiatives but the common challenge resided in achieving a synergy by integrating people, processes, and technology (p. 214).

A case study (p. 215) investigated the factors influencing the use and the success of several software applications used in the framework of managing knowledge. The findings indicated that technology itself serves as a communication medium for users but there are other factors at the organizational level that contribute to the KMS effectiveness and these are related to leadership, training, clear business strategy, aligning business goal with the technologies, collaboration, adaptive culture.

In conclusion, a KMS has common system features (*Input, Process, Output*) which should be aligned with the organization’s vision, goals, strategy, and culture to enable the desired *Outcome*, high performance. This can be measured through quantifying accessibility, effectiveness, and efficiency.

- *Input*: Content/Knowledge Assets.
- *Process*: Structure to support People (Users of the KMS to contribute to the knowledge creation, transfer and reuse), Process (Standards, Best practices defined to support seamless usage of the KMS while aligning with the organization policies, standards, guidelines), Technology (Functions and Infrastructure to support the business needs requirements).

- *Outputs*: Lessons Learned Repository, Best Practices Repository, Enterprise Search Capability.
- *Outcome*: Performance.

### **7. HPI intervention example 2: Coaching and research to support argument**

Coaching is one of the interventions of choice when the root cause of identified performance gaps is a lack of skills, knowledge and/or attitudes. It is a goal-directed dialogue intended to produce self-awareness, reflection and insight, new perspectives and choices, active experimentation, practice and learning, and the development of new habits that reflect expanded capabilities and capacities (Anderson and Anderson, 2005; Dunham, 2009; Strozzi-Heckler, 2007). These are consistent with several of the learning organization disciplines identified by Senge (1990). For the sake of this paper, we shall use Bluckert's (2006, p. 3) definition of coaching: "the facilitation of learning and development with the purpose of improving performance and enhancing effective action, goals achievement, and personal satisfaction." Coaching occurs in the context of organizations and commerce, and there are many approaches that can be taken (Bergquist and Mura, 2011). Organizational or business coaching (such as executive coaching and leadership coaching) looks to produce new performance and results for both the client (as an individual and/or for their team) and the organization (Dunham, 2009; Stout-Rostron, 2014). It is considered an essential tool for managers, as reflected by one former CEO: "Coaching is the single most important part of expanding others' capabilities" (Bossidy and Charan, 2002, p. 74).

Coaching has been proven to be effective as a single intervention, for increasing client skills and capability, and for improving work products and business results (American Management Association, 2008; Anderson and Anderson, 2005; Anderson, Brill and Lynch, 2007; Peterson, 2010; Phillips, Phillips and Edwards, 2012; Schlosser, et al., 2006; Theeboom, Beersma and van Vianen, 2013). Depending on the focus of the coaching, clients typically show improvements in self-awareness and focus; working relationships and communications; employee alignment and coordination of action; gains in individual and group productivity and employee engagement; reductions of workplace problems; increases in organizational performance; improved retention rates and recruitment outcomes; and acceleration of promotability and career advancement.

While the kinds of business (e.g., leadership or executive) coaching are often delivered by external coaches for a variety of reasons, there are many opportunities to develop and use coaching skills by internal coaches and managers taking a "coaching approach" to their engagement with reports (Goleman, 2000; Rock and Donde, 2009; Connor, 1998; Cooper, 2011). For example, Goleman's research about management (or leadership) styles identified six styles, each of which contributed to enhanced performance when used well in the appropriate context. Four of the styles (authoritative, affiliative, democratic and coaching) had a positive impact on organizational climate and business performance. The author concluded that no one style should be relied on exclusively. The learning opportunity was to discern the situation and people involved, identify the most

appropriate style to use, then engage and interact well using that style. When managers take a coaching approach to the way they engage with direct reports, they are less judgmental, less directive, and more tolerant of mistakes. This tends to increase the felt sense of psychological safety and trust, and to accelerate learning and engagement (Edmondson, 2008). This approach is especially effective when it is embedded within an organization's culture and is consistent with shared assumptions, beliefs and values (Evans, 2011).

There is a growing literature about the best practices to implement for business coaching (American Management Association, 2008; Corporate Leadership Council, 2003; Executive Coaching Forum, 2008; Peterson, 2010). For example, this includes focusing on business needs; matching coach well with their client; involving and leveraging senior manager participation; evaluating, recruiting and deploying external coaches well within the organization; and using performance standards to manage their coaching cadre (Corporate Leadership Council, 2003). Similarly, the American Management Association (2008) study identified many of the above factors, along with others: being discerning when to use an external, versus an internal, coach; considering the use of external training methods for internal coaches; connecting coaching with other training and development initiatives; and measuring the outcomes of coaching programs.

To summarize, coaching has proven to be a valuable and value-adding tool in the kit of change agents, performance improvement practitioners, and managers. That said, there is a learning curve for many organizations to identify when to use coaching and for whom, choose who will provide it, assure management involvement, monitor its use, and measure and report on its tangible and intangible impacts.

### **8. Observations about interaction effects of HPI interventions**

Performance analysis (gap analysis) often reveals more than one issue to address. From a systemic perspective, it is likely that there will be more than one intervention and an interactive effect across interventions. This suggests that there are probably opportunities to select and combine interventions (in a blended, coordinated fashion) to have a more powerful impact. For example, Lazar (2005; Lazar and Robu, 2014) conducted executive coaching with a Regional Sales Manager that, upon further analysis, warranted a broader, blended intervention. They were designed and implemented to work synergistically, producing an ROI of 799%. Similarly, in the pilot study to improve the performance of businesses and communities (Bernardez, et al., 2007), a combination of several consulting interventions, along with coaching, were implemented. The coaching was meant to support the performers in accelerating the adjustments and learning to perform in new, more effective ways. As an aside, the lead consultant observed that although consulting consumed 80% of the effort and resources while coaching consumed 20%, coaching provided 80% of the value and consulting 20% (Mariano Bernardez, personal communication, February 15, 2011).

It is reasonable to anticipate that any KMS intervention (designed to address multiple performance gaps), when designed and introduced, will include multiple performance interventions designed to work in a coordinated and synergistic manner. For example, one

can anticipate that performers might benefit from coaching support around new work assignments and performance expectations, new reporting and customer-performer relationships, and process-related changes. As a change management intervention, KMS benefits from addressing the human performance dimension so the system performs as designed. In this scenario as well, coaching can produce a multiplier effect to accelerate learning and improve performance and business results.

## 9. Conclusions

As an approach, human performance improvement (HPI) enables the change agent or manager to view their organization. They can systemically and systematically understand it in terms of what's needed to accelerate learning and support adaptive, high performance in a sustainable manner. Current gaps and their potential solutions can be identified, prioritized, and implemented against strategic needs and resources. There is an increased probability that alignment can be enhanced, performance barriers removed or mitigated, engagement and trust increased, and both efficiency and effectiveness concerns addressed. An intervention-neutral stance, informed by analysis of the data. Increases the chance that wise choices of solutions can be made. The examples provided, Knowledge Management Systems and coaching, are part of the toolkit available to positively impact learning, performance, and business results. Each organization will have many opportunities to identify solutions that can work together synergistically, multiplying the intended beneficial consequences. What's needed is the leadership with the vision and courage to endorse, authorize, and model taking such a journey, along with the organizational expertise to make it a successful one.

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