

# Unleashing Learning: From Strategy to Execution

## Observations from the Chief Learning Officers Symposium

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**W**hat is learning? What is the perspective of the modern corporation or Government organizations on learning? Who is responsible for learning in an organization? Is there a difference between education and training? And how do we deal with the impact of technology and the internet in today's learning environment, especially with regard to the demographic breakdown on how to learn.

These and many other questions were raised at the Fall 2010 Chief Learning Officer Symposium, held in Dana Point, CA. The conference was reflective of the "tsunami" like changes in learning. The position of Chief Learning Officer (CLO) is relatively new by name and position in

the Corporate Suite as traditionally, training and education would be mainly found in the Human Resources department. H.R. departments managed training programs specific to their organization's requirements. Professional development also became an important component in talent management especially through external associations who offered industry specific learning, including knowledge and skills certification of the workforce.

With these increased demands on learning, when combined with the pressure of keeping costs low, many companies have elevated responsibility for talent management to the corporate suite with the growth of the CLO. The need for increased compliance oversight by H.R.

required H.R. managers to focus their resources on regulations and employee requirements. *Chief Learning Officer* magazine, [www.clomedia.com](http://www.clomedia.com) has been a driving force in the growth of learning as a corporate level responsibility and behind the CLO Symposium.

CLO's have found a voice through these conferences. This year's theme "Unleashing Learning: From Strategy to Execution," dealt with the pressure of our difficult economy and the ability of organizations to execute their educational goals.

### LEARNING TRENDS IN 2010 AND BEYOND

Caroline Avey, Learning Strategies and Director, Innovative Learning Solutions at ACS Learning Services spoke of the pres-

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sure that learning organizations are under to respond to their corporate clients. These requirements include connecting learners at a distance, condensing learning seat time, increasing accessibility to learning and most important, ensuring that all learning provides value and a definable outcome.

The availability of technology has vastly empowered individuals to direct their own learning. Tools offered by Ms. Avey included augmented reality (mobile tagging), iPad kiosk learning and quasi 3-D

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learning portals. Rather than obtaining learning packages through onsite classes or web enabled teaching, such tools allow employees to direct their own learning, based on objectives given to them. In a way, we can say we now see the “Googling” of knowledge acquisition. The CLO essentially becomes a facilitator rather than a package of training.

### LINKING TUITION ASSISTANCE INVESTMENT TO YOUR TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Panel participants representing Lockheed Martin, Prudential Insurance and Verizon Wireless offered perspectives on why companies view employee learning programs as vital and effective investments in human capital. Companies are reshaping tuition programs to meet their workforce development and career development needs and leveraging meaningful partnerships with higher education partners. Essential to successful programs is identification and measurement of program outcomes to ensure value from their investment. These corporate executives were not only offering theories but relaying actual, growing initiatives in learning at these Fortune 500 companies.

Can a company realistically measure the ROI of learning programs? Yes, stated Dr. Ruby Rouse, University of Phoenix School of Advanced Studies. A national study of employer sponsored educational programs estimated that poorly planned

programs waste about \$6,000 per employee. Measurements include employee retention, departmental productive and per capita learning expenses.

### THE MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEE—DRIVING HIGH PERFORMANCE AND WORKFACE ENGAGEMENT

As a result of growing up with the Internet and associated devices, millennials are often said to be the most technologically savvy generation to date. Born between 1981-1999, this group began to enter the work force at the turn of the century. A panel of leading organizations, including ManTech International, Best Buy, the Gap, and UnitedHealth Group, and represented by senior executives responsible for strategic learning, explored creative ideas and innovative concepts that apply to maximizing performance from their millennial employees. As the definition below suggests, and as occurs with each generation, organizations must adapt to millennials and millennials must be supportive of corporate goals. There is no one secret ingredient but many ingredients.

In summary, learning is everyone’s business but the CLO position has the authority and responsibility of driving the value of learning. Technology and the millennial generation will empower self learning, including its benefits and risks. An organization must assess the ROI of learning and the responsibility to insure learning is measurable, rather than making budget cuts to satisfy corporate cost cutting. Go forth and learn!

**DEFINITIONS:** (from various dictionary sources)

- **Training** – Organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient’s performance or to help attain a required level of knowledge or skill
- **Education** – An act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life
- **Millennials** – The millennials joining your workforce now are employees born between 1980 and 2000, or 1981 and 1999, depending on the author. Unlike the Gen-Xers and the Boomers, the Millennials have developed work characteristics and tendencies

from doting parents, structured lives, and contact with diverse people. Millennials are used to working in teams and want to make friends with people at work. Millennials work well with diverse coworkers. *DTJ*

## AMU JOB OPPORTUNITY

*American Public University/American Military University is expanding its Transportation and Logistics Management outreach team with a second manager.*

### Marketing Manager, Transportation, and Logistics Markets

**Synopsis of Role:** The Marketing Manager, Transportation and Logistics Markets will develop, maintain, and expand relationships with private and commercial sectors in the fields of supply chain management, transportation and logistics, as well as related markets in order to increase awareness of American Public University System (APUS) programs and offerings. This individual will provide key input for developing the APUS marketing plan as well as provide insight for advertising and reaching out to supply chain and transportation and logistics professionals in business and industry organizations. This position will work closely with businesses and professional organizations to form partnerships and ensure representation and dissemination of APUS program materials in appropriate venues to increase awareness of APUS academic programs. In managing relationships with various organizations, this individual will work to develop partnerships as well as sponsorships for APUS conferences, symposia and other academic events and activities. This position will also be responsible for providing input for targeted marketing and promotional campaigns to reach specific audiences within this market.

**Job Location:** Manassas, VA, US  
**Position Type:** Full-Time/Regular

For more on this and other openings: go to <http://tinyurl.com/2d4567x>

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