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As Managing Partner and Faculty Member for PA Management Development Practice, Sundridge Park Business School (United Kingdom), he utilized his skills in strategy, management and marketing techniques to develop programs, lecture and consult with clients in a multitude of industries. At Cranfield University School of Management, he was Client Partner and Academic Director for customers from the insurance, banking, trading, manufacturing, retail, telecom and other industries. Keith holds a post-graduate Masters degree in Management Studies and two Masters qualifications in Marketing Behavior and Marketing Strategy, and a Masters in Music.

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Mentoring as a part of the Continuous Learning Journey

Summary and Introduction

Applied learning must be focused on a continuous learning journey. Most people in organizations learn because the organization fosters and encourages learning activity that is applicable to the job, to the future, and to the aspirations of the organization.

A traditional response was the 'sheep dip' approach. This was to set targets of learning new knowledge and skills by organizing a series of 'stand and deliver' training programs that everyone attended. It worked to a point, but in the last twenty years organizations, driven by retention, knowledge management, and skills development, have become much more interested in how people actually learn.

Peter Senge wrote extensively about what motivated individuals and teams to learn, and Honey and Mumford extensively employed Kolb's learning preferences to understand how individuals absorb and act upon information, which they necessarily receive and assimilate in different ways. Leadership gurus such as Blanchard and Collins also pointed out that people in organizations are motivated to learn for different reasons, depending on the leadership style and the situation.

In today's world more and more organizations are employing various different methods of experiential or applied learning techniques to foster value-added leading edge thinking. As most organizations mature, intellectual capital and the development of new, marketplace-oriented ideas are often the only difference between them and the competition.

The sum total of absorbing new data, comparing this with existing data, applying knowledge and experience, enabling understanding, and creating scenarios for future strategy and activities is often called wisdom. Wisdom has become a very important value-add component for organizations to integrate as a part of brand behavior. To enable wisdom through the application of learning solutions, most organizations are developing staged processes:

- a) Team assessment and individual capability and learning styles assessments
- b) Tailored experiential learning workshops and events
- c) Leadership and teamship-inspired small team coaching development
- d) Ongoing mentoring by in-house individuals and external experts by face-to-face and distance learning methods.

Placing Mentoring Along the Learning Continuum

This think piece discusses where Mentoring can be placed in an individual's learning continuum, and how Thunderbird Learning Consulting Network provides the external component in an end-to-end learning solution.

History of Mentoring

Traditionally, great and rounded leaders had great mentors. Aristotle mentored Alexander the Great; Belgian cycling legend Eddy Merckx mentored Lance Armstrong, and in business, Freddie Laker mentored Sir Richard Branson. And so, a mentor has become a trusted friend, a counselor, a teacher...a person who is prepared to impart wisdom and plain common sense.



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In many businesses for the last twenty years there has been a practice of in-house mentoring or peer coaching. New employees come under the guiding wing of a reasonably senior and seasoned person to enable them to embark upon learning journeys and voyages of experience. Today many senior executives have part-time mentors who may embark upon programs to improve shortfall skills or may act as advisors and counselors.

Increasingly organizations understand the value of mentor-protégé relationships to speed change in processes and behavior, to develop conscious competence, and to develop value-added knowledge, skills and behaviors. Examples of this can be seen at all levels. Car mechanics are mentored in customer-facing skills, electrical engineers are mentored in customer-facing team skills, and sales people are mentored in go-to-market strategic skills.

Thunderbird Learning Consulting Network offers Mentoring in a Variety of Ways

Who are the Mentors?

- a) Our world-class faculty and adjuncts based around the world form a network of mentors in all global-related and most business-related subjects
- b) Thunderbird was created in 1946. We have a huge world class alumni base across the world that has created a further potential mentoring network. We can source most areas of expertise and every different level of managerial experience
- c) Thunderbird Corporate Learning Alliances and Partners include global organizations and learning organizations that specialize in Coaching and Mentoring. To name but two, The Hay Group provides mentoring in team assessment and development and leadership, and the Lore International Institute specializes in motivational behavior, influencing, and coaching skills.
- d) The TLCN consulting team specializes in a full range of business solutions related to strategy formulation, development and execution, business and competitive intelligence, strategic market entry, global sourcing, go-to-market and customer engagement.

How do we Mentor?

- a) We can establish individual one-to-one relationships with executives and managers to develop and enhance decision-making, knowledge and skills
- b) As a part of a change management program, we can mentor people and process through the change
- c) As a part of an applied learning solution, we can establish mentoring relationships in the workshop or breakout that will continue the post experiential learning phase for the duration of the change intervention or project

What methods do we use?

- a) The traditional approach of mentoring through regular face-to-face meetings
- b) The mixed approach, where some face-to-face meetings are interspersed with phone calls, emails, and electronic mail report reviews
- c) Open mentoring, which mirrors advanced technology and changes in organizational reach and behavior in this global world. Open mentoring is a blended mix of such media as e-learning, web casts, teleconferencing, and open pathway project building.

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