

# Learning as a Strategy for Business Success

---

Charles Goretsky

# Agenda

- What is Continuous Learning?
- The Agile Organization
- Case Studies
- A Learning Culture

*“In our culture, you have to always be improving processes, making things simpler. If you cannot learn or are a slow learner, or don’t even try to learn, you would quickly become a dinosaur in our company. The rising stars in our company are the learners.”*

*Manager, ING Direct*

# Objectives

- Understand the basic concepts of Continuous Learning
- Consider the advantages for an Agile Learning Organization
- Appreciate how a learning culture is critical to business outcomes
- Gain insights from best in class organizations and high impact learning culture best practices



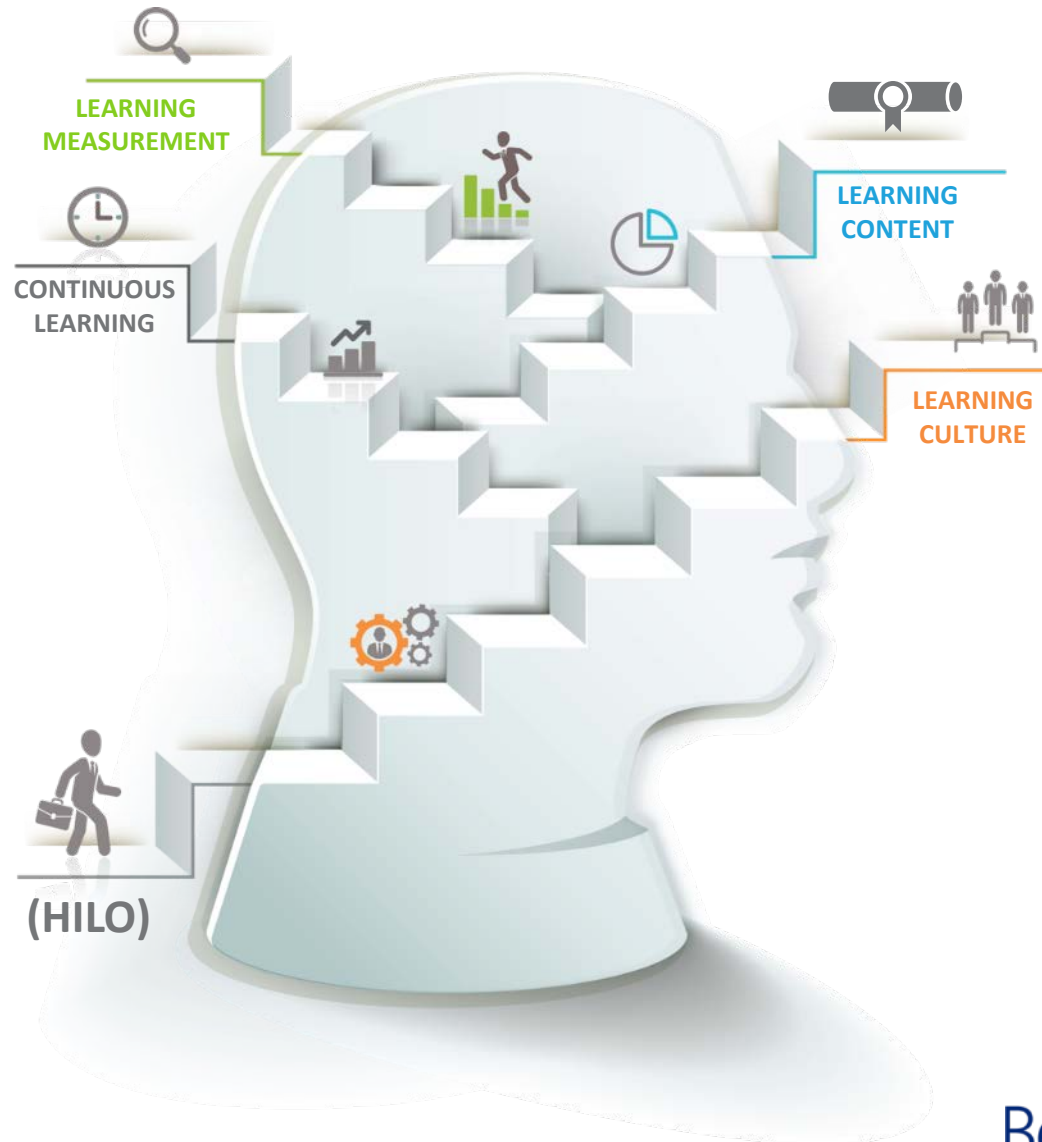
Workforce  
Planning

Career  
Development

**Education &  
Training**  
**(Continuous  
Learning)**

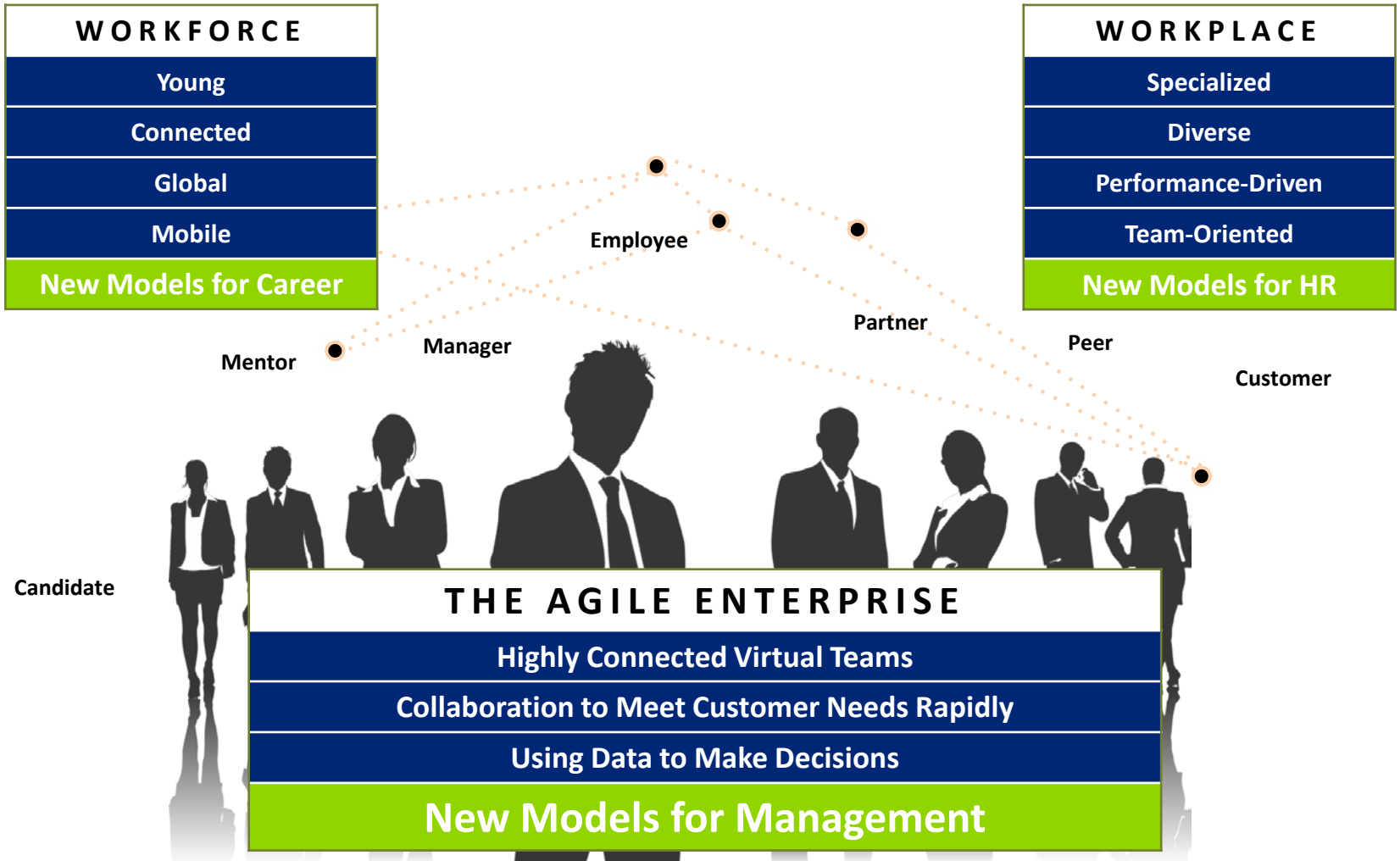
Alignment  
with  
Recruiting and  
Retention

# What is Continuous Learning?



# The Changing Workplace & Workforce

The unique characteristics of today's workforce and workplace create a need for a more agile environment.



# How the Talent World has Changed

*“Our candidates today  
are not looking for  
a career...”*

*“They’re looking for  
an Experience.”*



# Continuous Learning

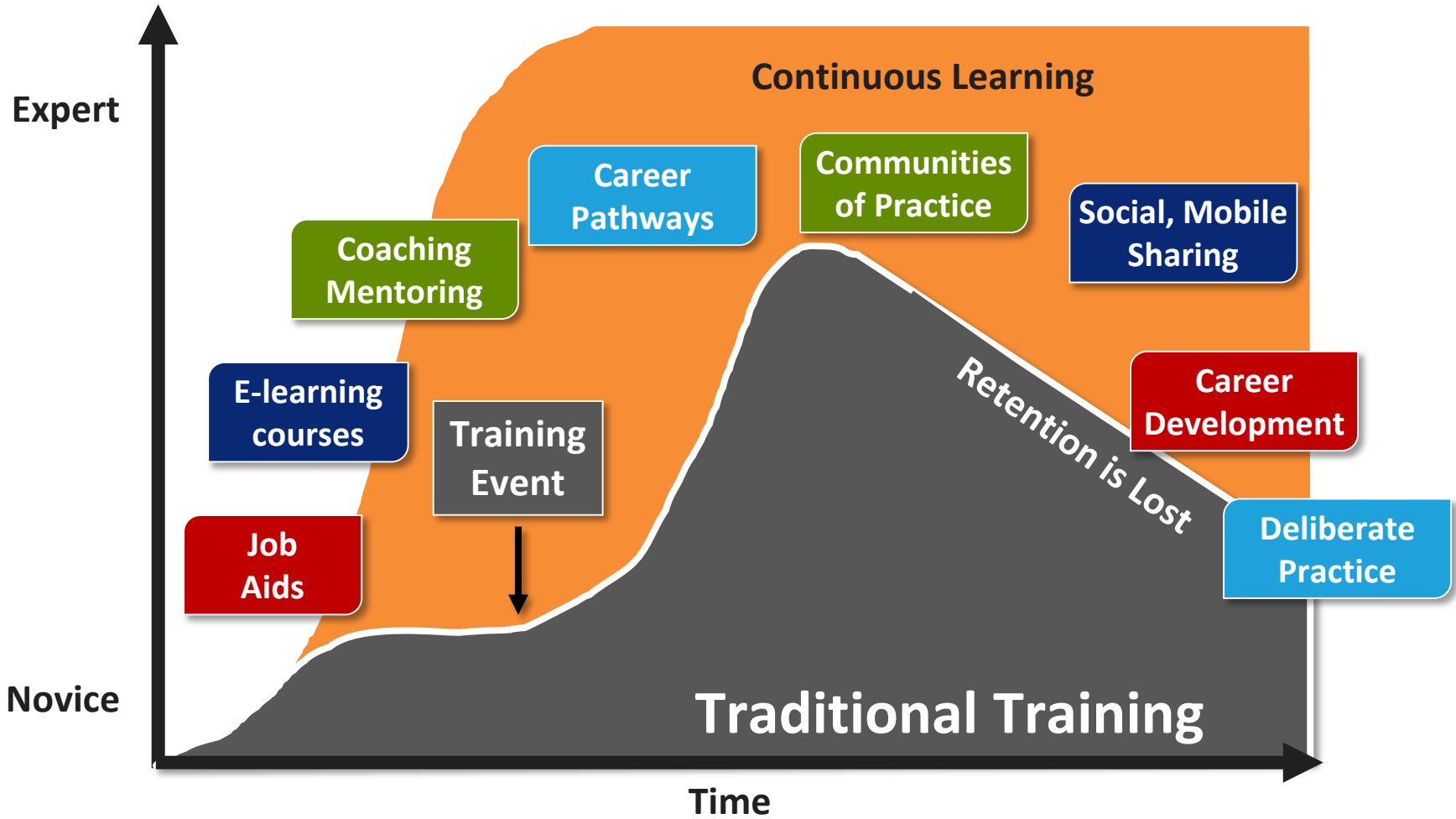
What do we mean by continuous learning? As the name suggests, continuous learning is not solely about formal, planned, learning activities. Rather, its resources, expectations, and learning culture is organized in such a way as to encourage employees to learn continuously throughout their tenure with the organization.

**A continuous learning model is preferable to a traditional model in helping businesses remain agile and responsive for the following reasons:**

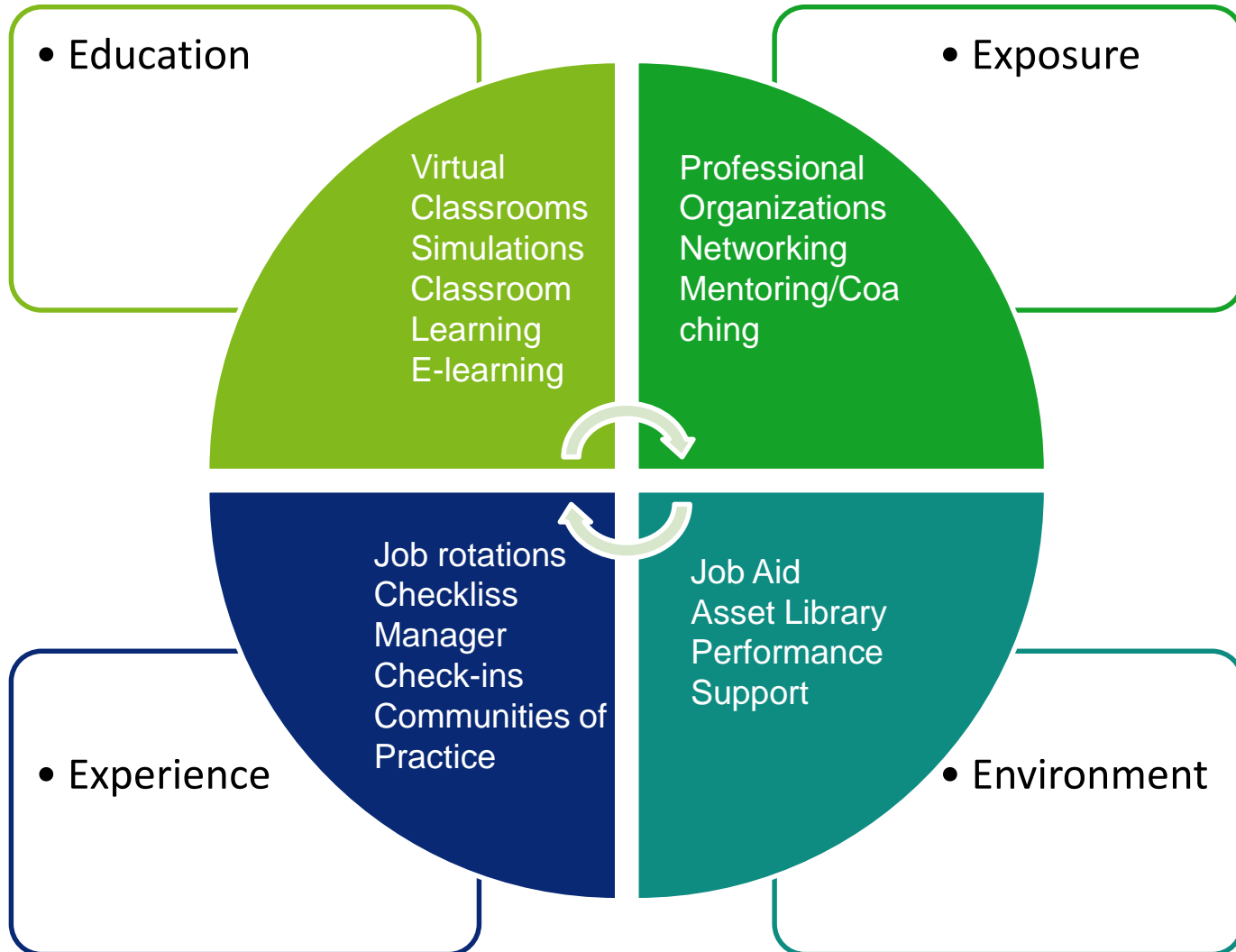
Creating a  
Culture of  
Learning

More Adaptable

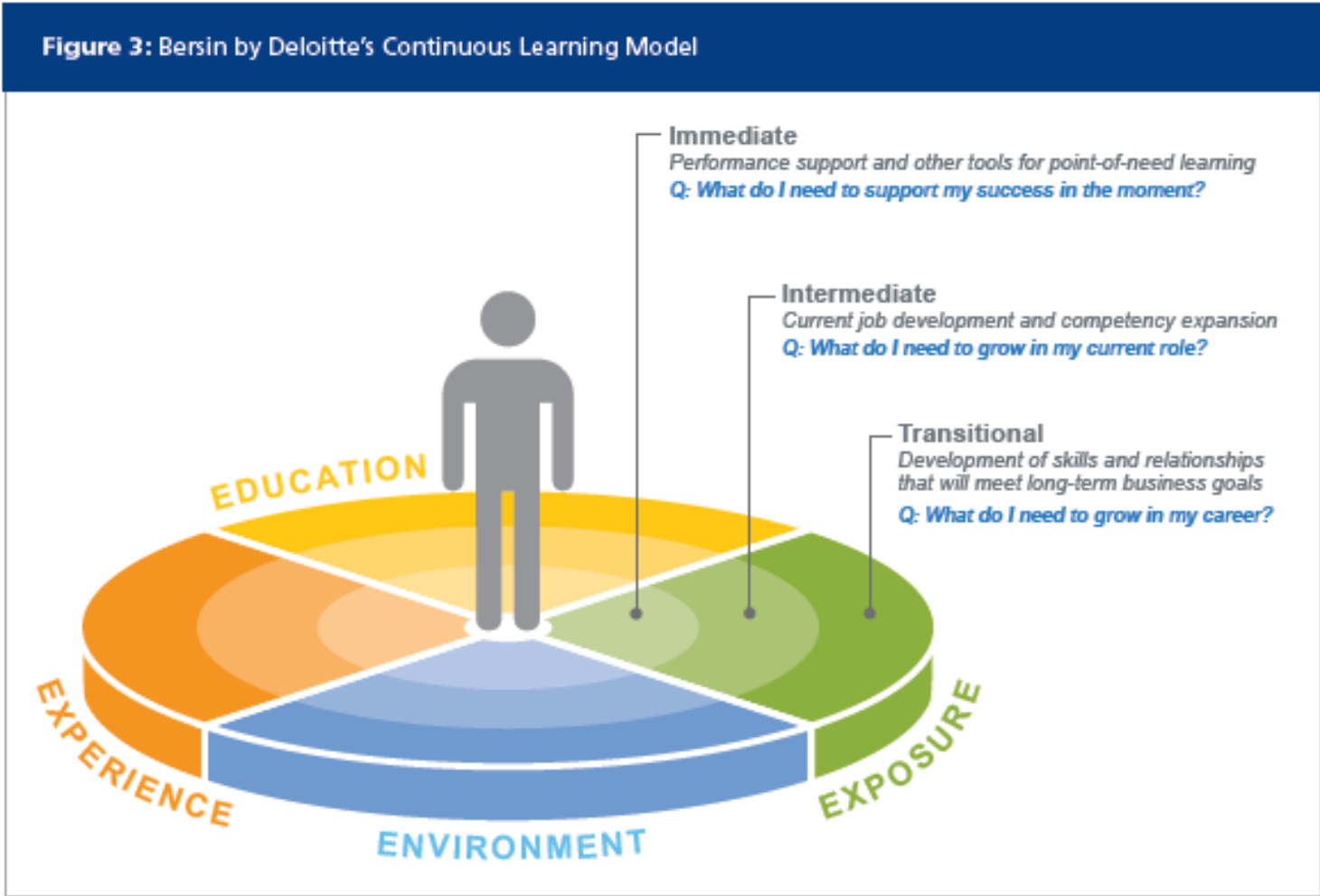
# The Continuous Learning Model



# Approaches in Continuous Learning Model



# Bersin by Deloitte's Continuous Learning Model



Source: Bersin by Deloitte, 2013.

# The ROI of Expertise

*The Lifecycle of a Specialist or Leader*

*“Even when we hire a senior engineer from a competitor it takes them 5-7 years to be fully productive in our environment.”*

- Global Energy Company

You invest in the individual

Novice

Beginner

Capable

Expert

World Class

# Case Study: Institutionalized Knowledge Sharing at the Federal Reserve

- Integrate knowledge-sharing programs and processes with organization's strategic business objectives;
- Integrate knowledge-sharing with performance management processes (including making it a core competency for many in the organization);
- Consistently reward and recognize for participation; and,
- Encourage employees to see knowledge-sharing as a leadership development opportunity.

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK *of* CLEVELAND

# Traits of Agile Organizations

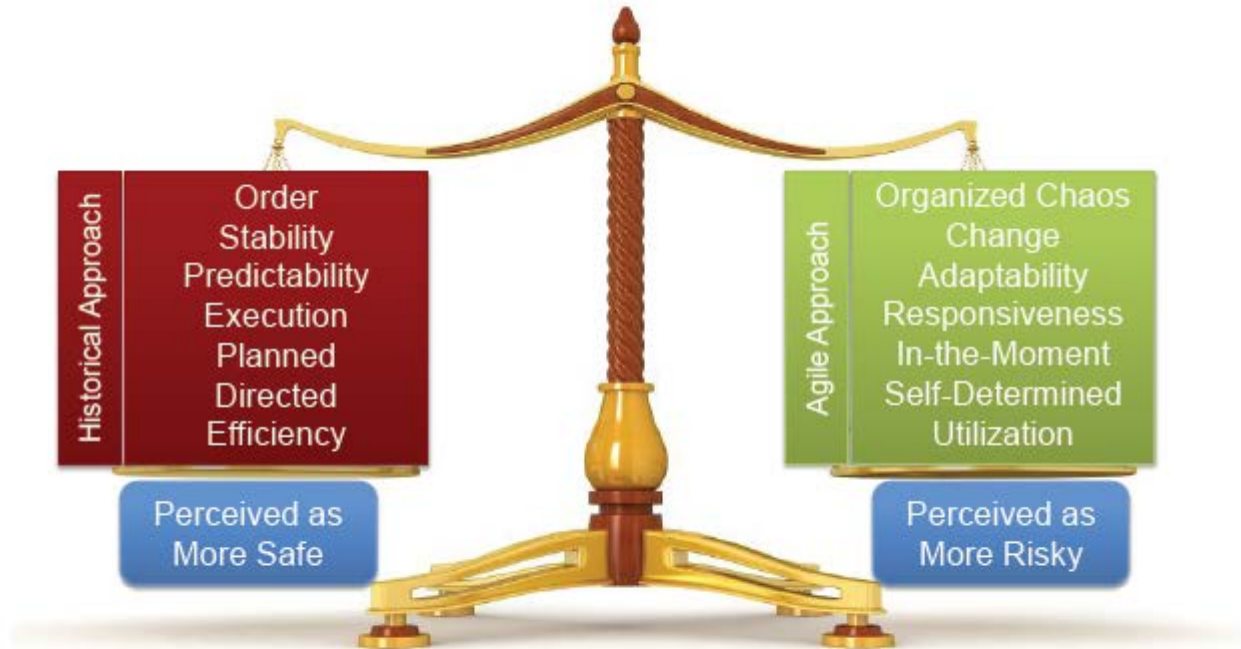
**According to business executives, agile organizations have the following traits:**

1. Rapid decision-making and execution
2. A high-performance culture
3. The ability to access the right information at the right time



# The Challenge for Agile Organizations

Figure 1: The Agile Challenge—  
Balancing Structure and Flexibility



Source: Adapted by Bersin by Deloitte from "Dynamic Organizations: Achieving Marketplace and Organizational Agility with People," CAHRS Working Paper Series, Cornell University/Lee Dyer and Richard A. Shafer, January 2003.

# What is Learning Agility?

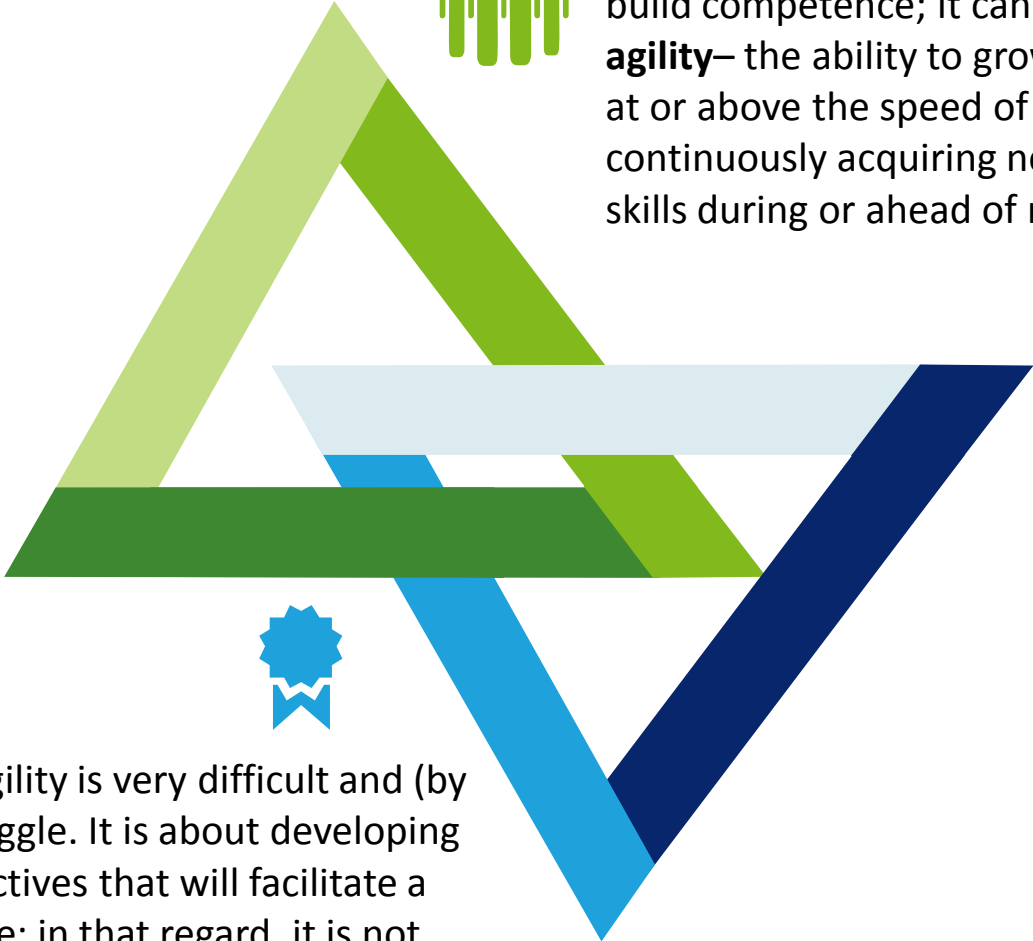


***Organizations are also learners. They learn collectively- and organizational learning is more than simply the sum of all individual learning. Therefore, our definition and Model apply at both the individual and organizational levels.***

# High Impact Learning Organizations



The organization can acquire knowledge and build competence; it can develop **learning agility**– the ability to grow, change or innovate at or above the speed of one’s own market by continuously acquiring new knowledge and skills during or ahead of market changes.



Achieving high-learning agility is very difficult and (by definition) a constant struggle. It is about developing the capacities and perspectives that will facilitate a nimble response to change; in that regard, it is not program- or initiative-driven.

# Case Study: AETNA

**Company Overview:** Aetna, a leader in healthcare, dental, pharmacy, group life and disability insurance, and employee benefits, is an example of how a concerted, business-driven focus on developing talent can save an organization. **The company is also proof that it is best to reward the product of learning, such as new skills developed, not the act of learning itself.**



**Key Takeaway:** According to Aetna's CLO, the organization recognizes effort, but they reward results. What matters is whether he/she gained new skills – and is successful at his/her job. All developmental conversations at Aetna are focused on these results.

# Case Study: BNY Mellon

**Company Overview:** BNY Mellon Asset Management is a leading global provider of investment management products and services. For BNY Mellon, learning is a critical part of its success – not for its own sake, but because it helps to create value for customers and stakeholders. **As the chief learning officer (CLO) of BNY Mellon has said, “Setting a talent-related goal is easy to talk about, but it is hard to do.”**

**Talent Management Approach:** The organization has clearly defined both the current state of talent in the company via a comprehensive needs assessment and where it needs to be. BNY Mellon has validated this plan with senior executives and has continued to talk about it for several months to get everyone well-acquainted with the vision.



BNY MELLON

# Case Study: Keller Williams Realty Inc.

**Company Overview:** Founded in 1983, Keller Williams Realty Inc. is the third-largest real estate franchise operation in the United States. Keller Williams Realty embraces learning as a strategic imperative for core business success.

**Commitment to Learning:** Aside from a few basic compliance courses for office administrators, virtually 100 percent of the learning at Keller Williams is voluntary. The company believes people devalue top-down learning mandates and practice avoidance strategies. Therefore, the priority is on creating engaging, valuable content that will be pulled by agents looking for help.



# Why is Learning Culture critical to Business Outcomes?



# What is a learning culture?

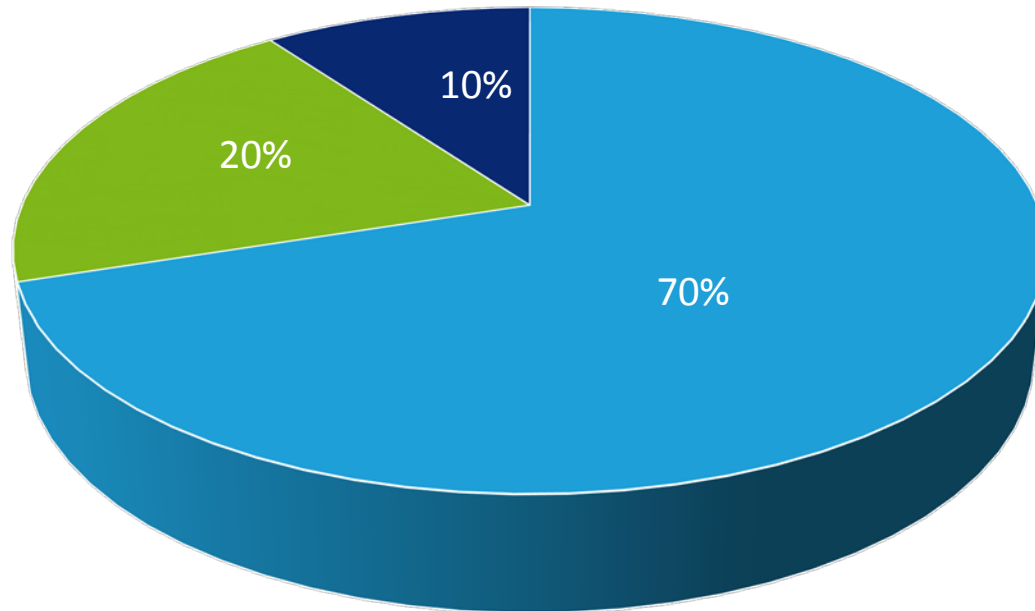
***“A learning culture is an organization-wide belief that the organization’s strategy, mission and operations can continuously be improved through an ongoing process of individual and organizational learning.***

***It includes a set of investments, programs and processes to study areas of weakness, explore causes, and exploit opportunities to improve and learn at all times and at all levels.”***



# The Learning Process

## How Learning Happens in Organizations



■ Coaching on the Job   ■ Information in Support of Work   ■ Formal Training

# Formal and Informal Learning

We must account for **all learning**, not just the formal; so our model must distill the process of learning down into its most basic and widely applicable parts. We found that (*regardless of why or how*) when learning happens there are two fundamental activities:

1. We **acquire** new knowledge and / or competence; and,
2. We **apply** that knowledge and / or competence.

As for the learners (including individual employees, teams or the whole organization), they bring the following two key constraints to this process:

1. The **ability** to learn; and,
2. The **motivation** to learn.



# Enabling and Facilitating Corporate Learning

## Traditional Training Model

Training organization is “The Place for Learning”

Focus on training programs, delivery and measurement

Learning as an event

Learning driven by the training organization



## High-Impact Learning Organization

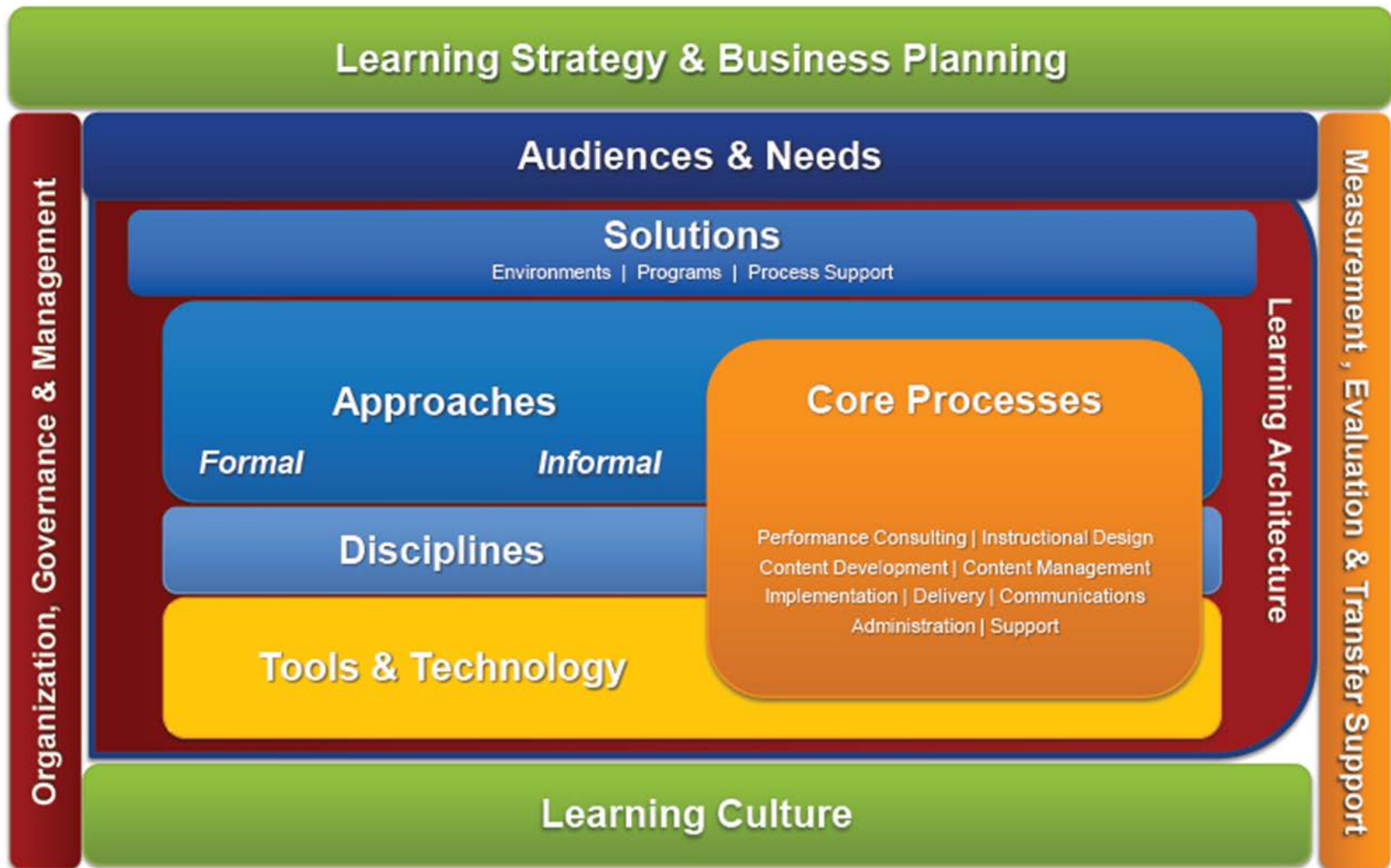
Learning organization facilitates and enables learning

Focus on building a “learning environment” that includes formal learning, collaboration and many organizational activities (e.g., coaching, action learning, mentoring and collaboration), which facilitate continuous learning

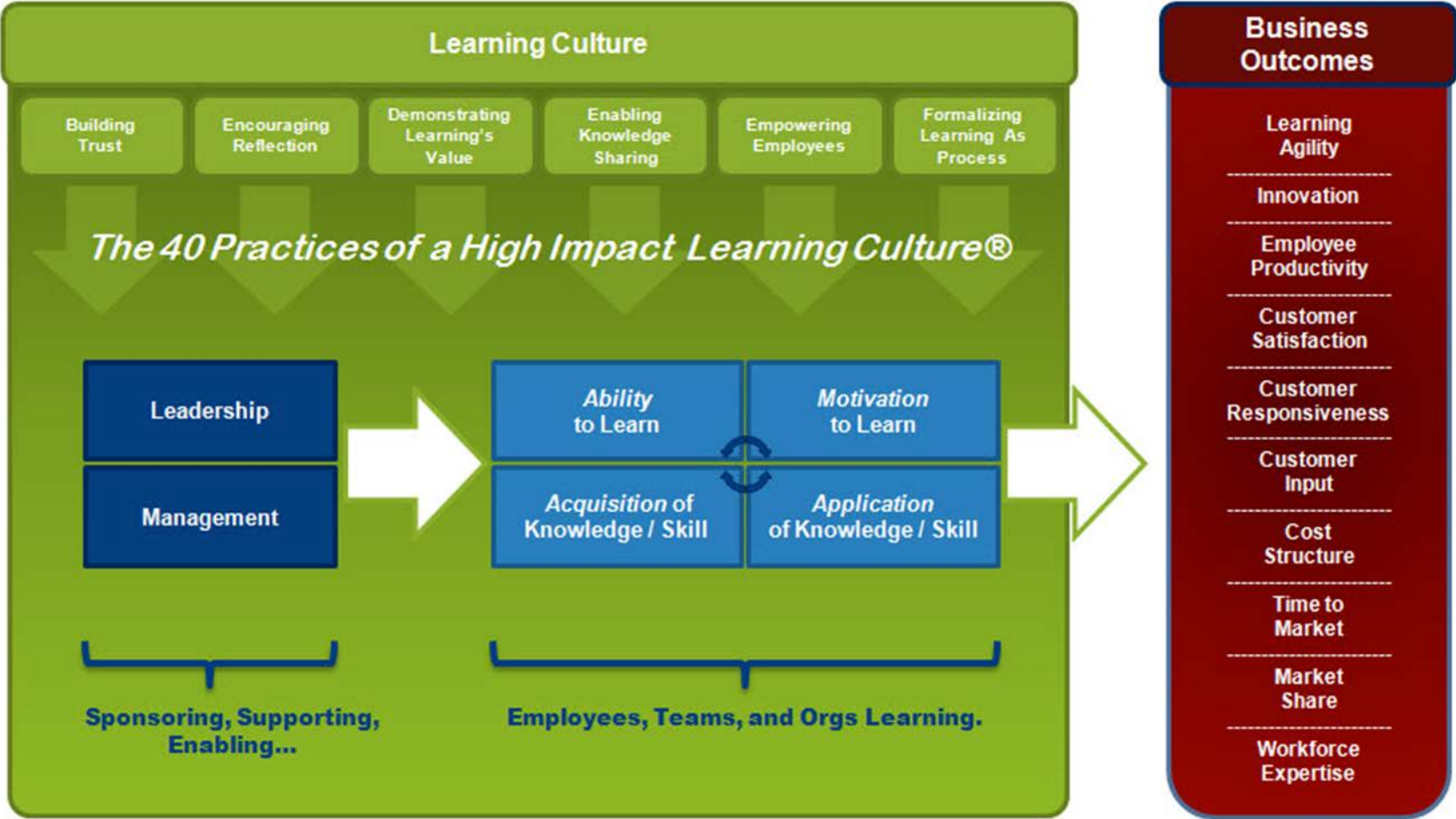
Learning as a continuous process

Learning driven by the employees and managers themselves, with many learning opportunities made available

# Bersin & Associates Enterprise Learning Framework



# Bersin & Associates High-Impact Learning Culture Model



# Key Business Performance Measures

## Measure

## Business Outcome

Employee Productivity



Ability for employees to do more with less

Innovation



Ability to create new products, services and processes that are better than previous

Learning Agility



Ability to adapt to market changes and to take full advantage of new opportunities

Workforce Expertise



Ability to maximize the percentage of employee experts

Time to Market



Ability to get products out faster

Market Share



Ability to win over competition in the market

Customer Responsiveness



Ability to respond to immediate customers' needs quickly and efficiently

Customer Satisfaction



Ability to solve customers' problems to their expectations

Customer Input



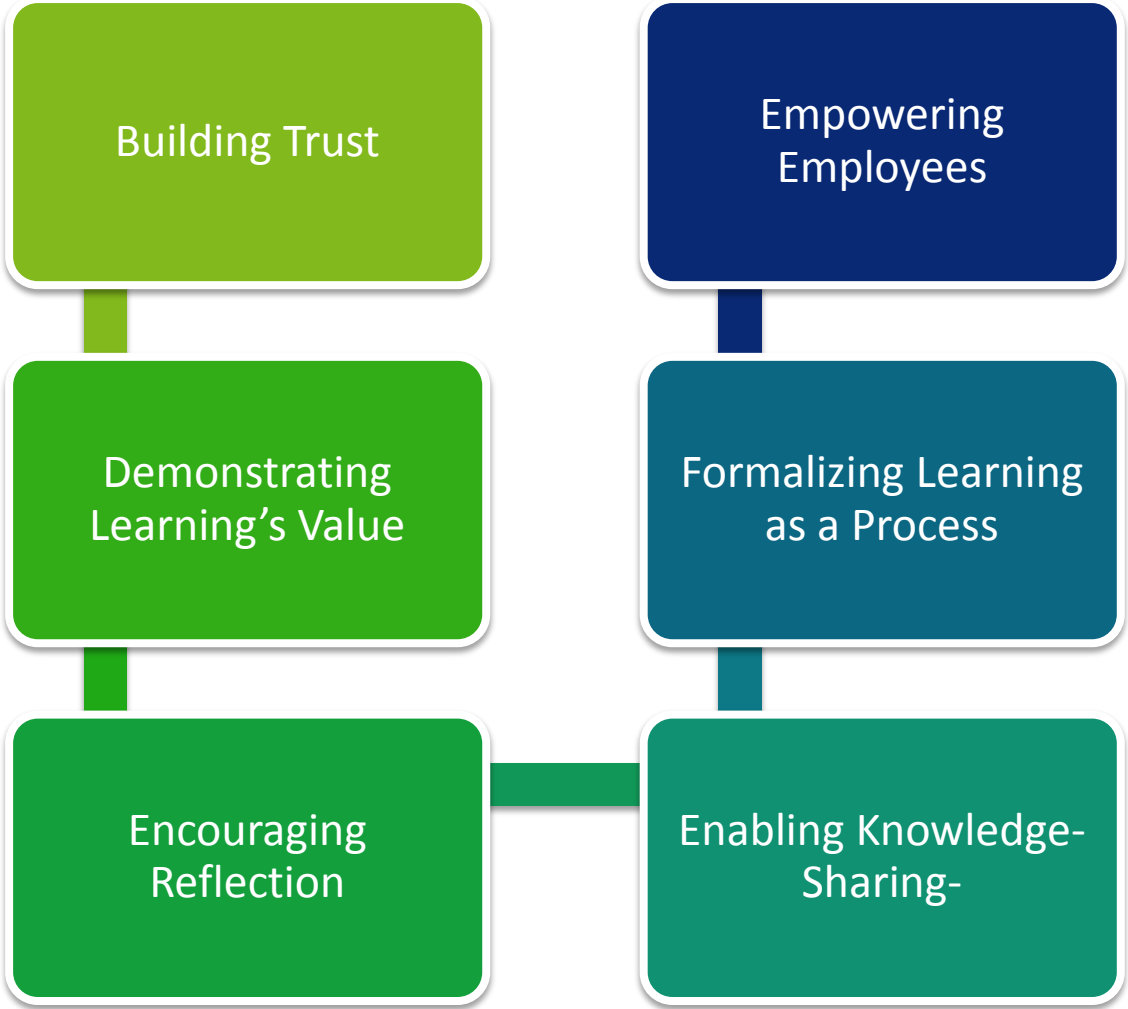
Ability to capture and act on customers' needs

Cost Structure



Ability to operate efficiently and to continuously reduce costs

# High-Impact Learning Culture: Key Categories



# High-Impact Learning Culture Best Practices

Practice	Category	Relative Impact on Business Outcomes
Leaders are open to “bad news.”	Empowering Employees	Very High
Asking questions is encouraged.	Empowering Employees	Very High
Decision-making processes are clearly defined throughout the company.	Empowering Employees	Very High
Employees are frequently given tasks or projects beyond their current knowledge or skills level in order to stretch them developmentally.	Formalizing Learning as Process	Very High
Employees in my organization have influence over which job tasks are assigned to them.	Empowering Employees	Very High

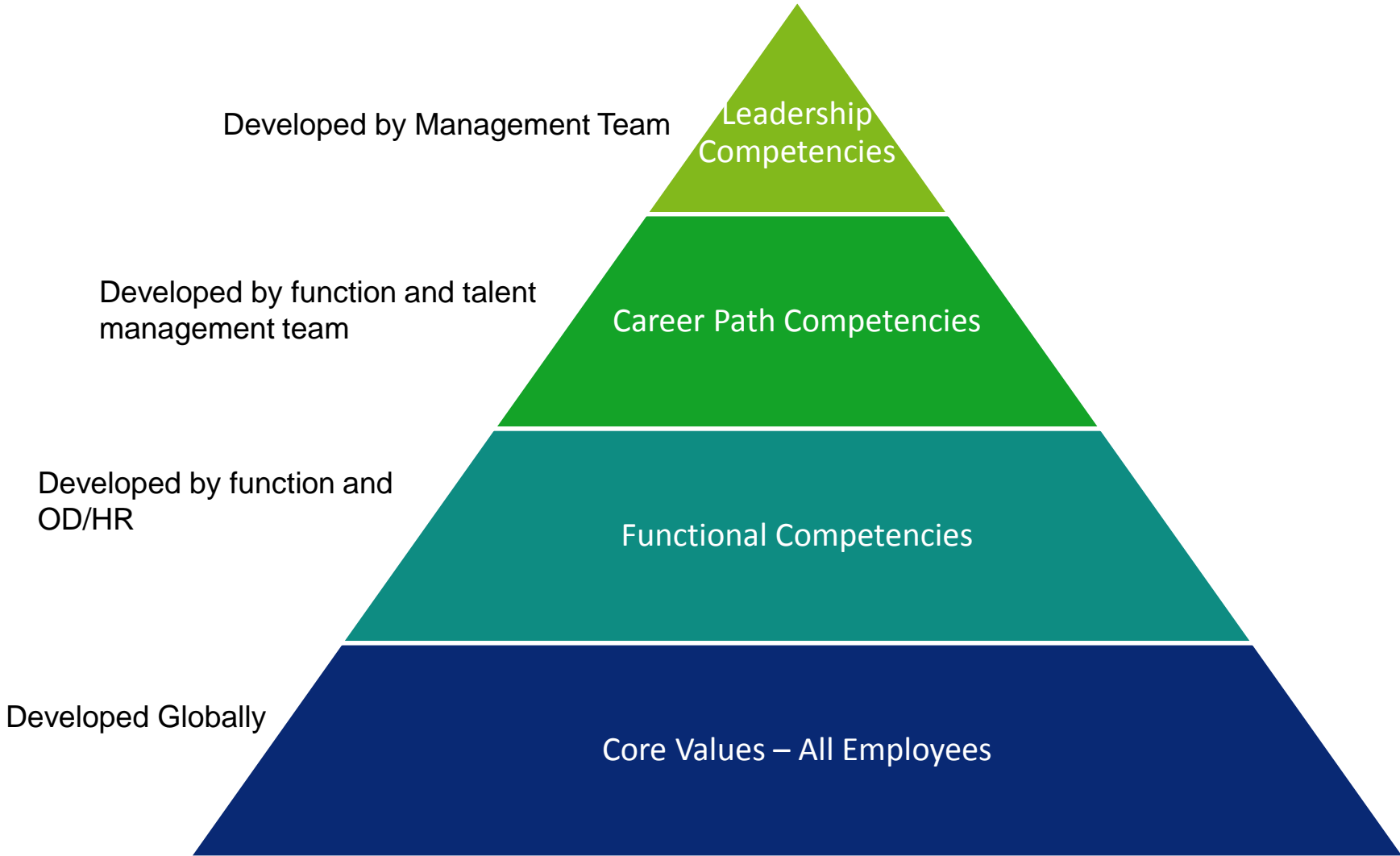
# High-Impact Learning Culture Best Practices

Practice	Category	Relative Impact on Business Outcomes
The organization values and rewards employees who learn new knowledge and skills.	Demonstrating Learning's Value	High
The organization values mistakes and failures as learning opportunities, and provides structured opportunities for reflection.	Encouraging Reflection	High
The organization values mistakes and failures as learning opportunities, and provides structured opportunities for reflection.	Demonstrating Learning's Value	High
The organization believes that learning new knowledge and skills is a valuable use of time.	Demonstrating Learning's Value	High
Employees generally believe the learning and/or developmental opportunities offered by the organization to be o high value.	Demonstrating Learning's Value	High
Employees in my organization take active responsibility for their own personal development.	Demonstrating Learning's Value	High

# Seven Ways for L&D and HR to Help Build and Sustain a Strong Learning Culture

- 
- 1 Make learning part of the organization's strategic success
  - 2 Make a belief in learning part of the organization's culture of leadership
  - 3 Make a great first impression for learning
  - 4 Make full use of captive audiences
  - 5 Make work educational
  - 6 Make knowledge-sharing an organizational habit
  - 7 Make performance management a driver of development

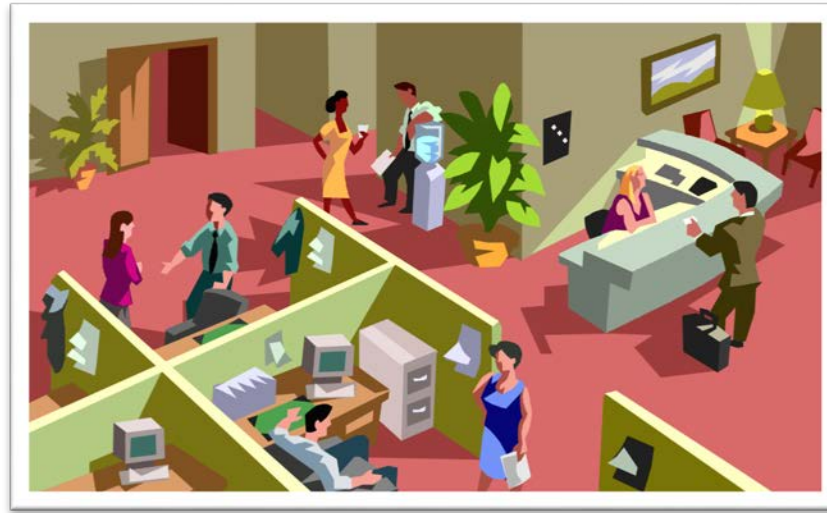
# Competency Management



# Case Study: Global Consulting Company

**Business Case:** This organization's principle business asset is its nearly 180,000 people around the globe. The company's business model revolves around a continuous process of recruiting and hiring people with raw talent, sometimes straight out of school, and then investing in their continuous capability development. Learning officials describe this people-development process as the company's "secret sauce."

**Internal Organization:** The internal learning and development organization is appropriately titled, Capability Development. The mission of capability development is to create a premier professional education program that builds both leaders and a differentiated workforce, enabling the acceleration of the business strategy.



# Consultancy's Specialization Roadmap

Level	Formal Learning	Collaboration	Guided Experience
Level 5 Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach classes and identify needs for new learning assets</li> <li>Purse executive education courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sponsor a community of practice</li> <li>Participate in external industry association or executive forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase personal capability by servicing as the “go-to” person in the relevant subject area</li> <li>Mentor others, especially advanced-level employees</li> </ul>
Level 4 Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serve as a subject-matter expert of development projects</li> <li>Volunteer to teach courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host a blog or contribute to a community of practice</li> <li>Provide guidance as a team leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer to be a mentor, both formally and informally</li> <li>Spend time interacting with employees on the front lines, observing and sharing experiences</li> </ul>
Level 3 Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enroll in advanced training for this content area</li> <li>Teach colleagues informally (e.g., brown bag discussions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively share experiences with peers during the course of performing work</li> <li>Contribute to discussions within a community of practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively pursue a relationship with a mentor and coach</li> <li>Work with a supervisor to pursue stretch activities and roles to expand basic competency</li> </ul>
Level 2 Proficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enroll in beyond-the-basics training programs</li> <li>Access relevant knowledge sources, tools and methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closely observe others while collaborating to perform tasks</li> <li>Actively ask questions of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek assignments and project roles to become more familiar with basic work processes and tasks</li> <li>Seek guidance from more experienced peers to improve ability to address new challenges</li> </ul>
Level 1 Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enroll in basic-level training</li> <li>Review relevant knowledge sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share experiences with other novices</li> <li>Seek out experiences of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask a coach or supervisor for guidance on specific tasks</li> <li>Adopt the mindset that mistakes are part of the learning experience; apply to lessons to the job</li> </ul>

# Need for Learning Culture



# The Correlation between Culture and Business Performance

Our research indicates that there is a direct, positive correlation between culture and business performance. Our data shows that learning culture directly accounts for 46 percent of overall improved business outcomes. Moreover, organizations with a strong learning culture significantly outperform their peers.

*Learning culture matters—not as a means to creating happy and informed employees, but as a business strategy. A learning architecture is the means for defining the structure which will create that learning culture.*



## Quick Recap: Key Takeaways

- ✓ Continuous learning models are preferable to traditional models in helping businesses remain agile and responsive in order to create a culture of learning and to be more adaptable.
- ✓ Agile organizations have the following traits: Rapid decision-making and execution, a high-performance culture and the ability to access the right information at the right time
- ✓ High-impact learning organizations take responsibility for helping to strengthen the culture of learning within the larger organizations they serve
- ✓ While change in culture of any sort is always measured in large blocks of time, the good news is that learning culture can be changed.
- ✓ Sustained, successful learning, therefore, requires the employee to be the driver. Organizations with strong learning culture (such as Aetna) consistently reinforce the need for employees to take ownership of their own development