

**The Impact of Academic Fields on Learning Organizations**

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## What are Learning Organizations?

There are several phrases in the academic world that true scholars know well. A few of these phrases include “solve for this equation,” “submit this assignment by the deadline,” or “write a few sentences about a given topic.” But what about a phrase such as systematic problem solving or experimentation? What about learning from past experiences or even learning from others. How about the phrase transferring knowledge? Do any of these phrases really mean anything? If one were to look at these items individually, they may not realize each of these items share any form of similarity. Although not noticeable at first, upon closer investigation, one can begin to determine that each of these items share a major commonality. The shared commonality between each of these phrases is the fact that they all represent some type of learning organization. (Kaur, 2022a, slide 20).

So, what are learning organizations specifically? By definition, learning organizations are divisions of management that allow individuals to continually broaden their creativity in ways where new patterns of thinking are created. Learning organizations pave the way for learning to become the tool companies use to reach their goals. It allows them to connect individual performance with organizational performance seamlessly. For example, Pizza Hut utilizes learning organizations to constantly invent new technology and implement this technology in their business. This method was created through recognizing the lifetime value customers offer to their corporation. (PeopleGoal, 2021) According to Forbes Coaches Council Member, Rick Gibbs (2020), the positive effects of fostering learning organizations within a corporation include continuous improvement, the retention of talented workers, increased collaboration, and business longevity. Gibbs (2020) states that companies who choose to make innovation a priority and strategically strive for growth are capable of creating learning organizations who will be able to

navigate through uncertain situations and unforeseen circumstances effortlessly. Gibbs points out that learning organizations do not magically appear in a business's structure. Rather, they have to be developed, nurtured, and improved upon in order to successfully assist a business to thrive. If a business chooses not to set aside time for the development of these learning organizations, failure will begin to appear in all aspects of their business. Through fostering strong learning organizations, companies are able to fashion a workplace full of success, employee happiness, and productivity.

When a business is working to develop learning organizations within their company, they must first establish a strong foundation of company disciplines. Before they can do that though, they must first determine if the company is prepared to change. For starters, a good question for management teams to ask themselves would be, "is my company prepared for or open to change?" Learning organizations are systems that are continually updating and adapting to the culture the business is working to create. If the company is not in a proper position for change and adjustments, failure can be the only outcome to implementing any type of learning organization. Secondly, management teams should work to determine if there are any weaknesses or learning gaps that could cause problematic situations in the future. Companies whose employees all collectively work towards a common goal create powerful management and employee loyalty. Additionally, it is important for companies to determine if their senior workers are in agreement with the change. This is important because the senior members of the company typically lead by example. Newer recruits often look to senior members to help determine their loyalty to the company. As outlined in an article by PeopleGoal (2021), some important disciplines to establish for effective businesses include building a shared vision, creating system

thinking, developing mental models, introducing team learning, and encouraging personal mastery.

With the utilization of learning organizations, corporations are able to be constantly aware of their environment. They are able to monitor weak points, identify new development opportunities, and create stronger goals. While learning organizations can prove to be beneficial to a business, another important element corporations must include into their business environment are academic fields. Without the incorporation of academic fields, a business may never reach their full potential. Pairing academic fields with learning organizations within a business is beneficial because it increases engagement, creates strategic approaches, and empowers the business as a whole.

### **What are Academic Fields and Why are They Important?**

By definition, academic fields are divisions of knowledge that can be taught as a higher level of education. Although there are numerous academic fields, there are only four academic fields that are specifically relative to business management. These four fields include leadership, psychology, strategy, and entrepreneurship. (Kaur, 2022b, slide 13). Leadership “involves the actions taken to mobilize others towards wanting to struggle for a common goal... [It]includes an understanding of when, where, and how to use more formal sources of authority and power, such as position or ownership” (Kaur, 2022b, slide 15) Psychology “refers to the study of how individuals act and behave as individuals and in groups throughout different situations” (Kaur, 2022b, slide 15). Business management is able to draw from psychology as it is applied to learn how individuals interact with each other in various workplace settings. The academic field of strategy can be explained as “the central, integrated, externally-oriented concept of how an

organization will achieve its objectives. Strategic management is the main body of knowledge that answers questions surrounding how firms differ and how those differences impact firm performance over time” (Kaur, 2022b, slide 18). The academic field of entrepreneurship can be “defined as the recognition of opportunities ([For example:] needs, wants, problems, and challenges) and the use or creation of resources which implement innovative ideas for new, thoughtfully planned ventures” (Kaur, 2022b, slide 16). Individuals who are striving to be successful entrepreneurs must be effective leaders who are capable of converting ideas into action. (Kaur, 2022b, slide 16).

### **The Importance of Implementing Academic Fields within Learning Organizations**

When a corporation chooses to implement strategy to the transfer of knowledge, the creation of strategic approaches increases. Sometimes strategy is executed in the form of an outlined series of tasks. Other times, strategy is implemented by enhancing employees’ business skills and knowledge. In either of these cases, the utilization of strategy allows organizations to become more proactive in growing their businesses. The intentional acts of increasing skills and goals creates consistency among all departments in a business and resources can be used more effectively. Developing strategies can be complicated but not impossible. According to Ardent Learning (2020), any strategy implemented must meet certain requirements to be considered an effective learning strategy. Ardent Learning (2020) states that some of these specific requirements include the strategy meeting “the needs of [the] organization’s workforces, technology, and audiences with different learning preferences” (para. 6). Strategies must also “tie directly back to [the] organization’s business goals/objectives” (Learning, 2020, para 6.) Within

learning organizations, implementing the academic field of strategy can prove to be one of a business's wisest decisions.

While strategy is an important academic field for businesses to focus on, the academic field of psychology is just as important. When implementing psychology in learning organizations, businesses are empowering the business as a whole. According to the American Psychological Association (2013), psychology "helps managers at all levels of organizations select, support, motivate and train employees" (para. 2). Psychology allows for the fostering of healthy behaviors which in turn allows businesses to design products and build better workspaces. Some ways businesses can focus on incorporating psychology in their learning organizations is through studying how individuals interact with the world around them. Whether that is with each other, technology, or equipment. Studying psychology allows a business to increase engagement through better understanding the wants and needs of the business as a whole and its employees. Corporations are also better able to tailor work experiences for their employees and customer services for their consumers. When a business chooses to implement the powers of psychology amongst their learning organizations, they are able to increase productivity, identify areas of weaknesses in development and training, and implement new business practices that can retain loyal, valuable employees.

The academic field of entrepreneurship is important to increasing engagement within a business. When entrepreneurship is encouraged, engagement levels rise. One way businesses can create entrepreneurship through engagement is by encouraging systematic problem solving. Systematic problem solving allows businesses to generate new approaches to problems and outside-of-the-box solutions. In combination with systematic problem solving, another way to increase entrepreneurship through engagement is encouraging the business as a whole to learn

from past experiences when confronted with new challenges. Typically, the level of employee engagement is directly tied to how the employees feel about their overall experience with the corporation they are working for. According to Business Leadership Today author, Matt Tenney (2022), as positive employee experiences increase, businesses begin to “yield improved retention, less absenteeism, better performance, and an increase in productivity, all of which boost profitability” (para. 15). If a business is looking to increase engagement within their corporation, it is vital to incorporate the spirit of entrepreneurship within their company.

The final academic field that must be included within learning organizations is leadership. Leadership is directly impacted by learning from others. Anyone can be a leader but a good leader knows that learning from their peers can be the determinant for success or failure. Whether this means the leader must trust or rely on the abilities of others over their own or integrating individuals in decision making, leadership is greatly shaped by the team who surround the leader. Leadership is important to incorporate within workplaces for multiple reasons. According to the Los Angeles Community College District’s Personnel Commission (2017), leadership provides focus to a business while also driving the team forward as a whole (para 2). Leaders are able to empower individuals to work at their greatest potential while also taking responsibility for decisions that are made. As businesses seek to build successful learning organizations, they must invest in strong leadership to avoid failure. (Personnel Commission, 2017, para 2-4).

### **Conclusion**

When modern managers investigate whether incorporating academic fields are important to their learning organizations or not, it is easy for them to learn that it is imperative to include

academic fields in their business. The first takeaway as to why this is the case is because you cannot have a learning organization without including an academic field. This is mainly because learning organizations are branches of academic fields and vice versa. Secondly, better understanding and utilizing academic fields can only benefit business. There is no downside to incorporating academic fields so it is almost common sense to desire to utilize them within a business. The third major takeaway to utilizing academic fields in learning organization is that although their utilization might seem common sense, that does not mean they are common sense. Businesses who desire to successfully utilize what academic fields have to offer must put in their own work in time to use them effectively. What works for one corporation may not work for another. There is a lot of trial and error and businesses have to be open to those risks. Professionally, researching academic fields and how to combine them with learning organizations can impact modern managers because it allows them to become more effective leaders. Effective leaders create successful businesses. Personally, applying these research findings to a future career can prove to be a valuable asset. Whether an individual is seeking to develop their own corporation or they are trying to determine if a particular corporation is the right one to work for, doing research on how a successful business should operate is important. Without a strong foundation of how a business should operate to be successful, employees and even owners can be overtaken by improper business practices. Not only are improper business practices a danger to the overall success of a corporation, but it could lead to lawsuits or other damaging impacts on the business. No corporation wants to find themselves fighting lawsuits or failure. This is why it is important for businesses, employees, and investors to do their research and strive toward learning how to successfully implement academic fields and learning organizations in their culture.



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