

“What means lifelong learning in France”

First of all, I'm not quite sure this question is still relevant.

Maybe we should spend time thinking about the changing nature of knowledge. How does a person become an expert and how long does he/she is still considered as an expert?. Up to now, you went to school, you studied a body of knowledge, received a degree or certification and then went to work, usually with the expectation that you would stay in that field, profession or career track for a lifetime.

But that's not what the world is like any more. Our world has become globally integrated, not only economically, but also in all the ways human society interacts with its environment locally and moreover, globally.

Globalization and drastic economic shift

There's no question that economics and low cost have been the initial reason why so much work has moved to places like India, China and Latin America, where labour costs are a fraction of those in Europe or in countries that used to be called “developed”. When every business can access to low cost from these countries, what makes you different?

Race for talents and skills

In this race for differentiation, businesses, governments and individuals are facing the collateral effect of global integration: the growing value of expertise.

In a world where the means of production and distribution are increasingly available to anyone, the only way to distinguish yourself is to have a unique value proposition and skills.

You've got to have a better idea. You've got to have the talent and competencies to do something that isn't just cheaper, but that makes you distinctive, that brings an adapted solution to new problems and added value to your organisation and/or your customers

Sustainability

And you've got to make this sustainable. Today, the economic and business climate is rapidly changing at a pace we've never seen before and change is the only stable value. In such an environment where you can so quickly lose your differentiation and competitive advantage, you've got to keep adapting, reinventing, transforming—in a word, innovating.

Innovation in the workplace

If organisations don't want to loose their employees, partners and customers, they urgently need to build agile workplaces that are...

- Dynamic – Able to adjust to rapidly changing business conditions
- Collaborative – Able to bring information and people together to share insights and solve business issues
- Connected- Able to access data and insights regardless of time, distance and organisational structures

Innovation for the workforce

That also mean innovation in the way you strategically manage your workforce: employment, competencies, careers, mobility, leadership and of course learning and training to anticipate continuously adapt to the new market conditions, opportunities and needs.

Impact on the individual

Even for someone who keeps his or her job in the same company, work in the globalizing economy of the 21st century is a constant series of transitions - from one skill set to another...from one business model to another...from one organization model to another, from a department manager to another.

Educational systems or employees experience didn't probably provide them with the right skills to cope with this new situation, in permanent transition and inherently unstable.

Becoming a learning organization

The creation of this "expertise" advantage requires careful planning to ensure that the right number people are trained on time, at the right place and in the proper way. The management of jobs and skills becomes then a strategic planning tool. Similarly, this new type of training constraint probably requires a different form, more individualized, practical and operational, providing a quicker operational maturity and a faster ROI for the organization. These new or rising practices encompasses short-term assignments abroad, rotations in other positions, apprenticeship, or even learning "on the job", helped by coaching or mentoring programs to ensure a more rapid success.

One aspect that shouldn't be underestimated is the imperious need of developing cultural sensitivity and cultural adaptability skills, as working outside its native environment, with people from different cultures, inside and outside the organization, with colleagues, partners or customers, is becoming the new "standard".

Continuous learning and knowledge sharing becomes the key to the transformation and success of the organization. Beyond technology, Information architecture and networking tools, the idea is really to invest in the capacity of each person to raise their competencies and skills to advance the collective capacity/ability of their departments within the organization. This new model, more adapted to the pace of change, requires an individual skills, gap and potential analysis and requires a "promise of value and meaning" from the organization to the employee, in terms of recognition, contribution, promotion reinforced by the feelings of equity, trust and loyalty, inspired and demonstrated by the leaders of the organisation.

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