

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

At C-Level: A Conversation With Robert E. Knowling Jr.

Pat Galagan

This article is part of a series of conversations with CEOs on the subject of learning. This month's interview is with CEO and teacher-in-chief of the NYC Leadership Academy, Bob Knowling.

The NYC Leadership Academy is part of a daring attempt to turn school principals into agents of change using techniques from corporate America, the U.S. military, and the schools themselves.

Formally a high-tech CEO, Knowling says he was enticed by the idea of transforming the New York public school system because, as he says, most of the students in that system "look like me." Knowling describes how the Mayor Bloomberg/Chancellor Klein plan will change NYC public schools, how leadership development is the only intervention that matters, and how he plans to succeed at the riskiest business challenge of his career.

An article by Galagan follows, "Business vs. the Board of Education," that describes the Bloomberg/Klien plan to transform NYC public schools.

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Outsourcing Training Begins to Find Its Niche

Paul Harris

The number of comprehensive training outsourcing contracts can be counted on one hand. They include Accenture Learning's contract to operate Avaya University. Task-oriented arrangements, which account for 85 percent of training-related outsourcing, are the practice that most organizations are comfortable with and are predicted to continue to dominate the field.

Yet, interest is growing in a third category of training outsourcing: the selective outsourcing of multiple learning tasks. Such engagements may include tactical management of some portion of the learning but not all of the business processes included in an organization's training operations. Thomas Kraack, lead partner for Accenture Learning, believes that once customers gain confidence in the full capabilities of their top tier outsourcing suppliers, the field will transform quickly.

What's complicating that transformation is the shortage of senior business strategists in training roles. Even so, experts caution against outsourcing the strategic planning function: "You want an outsourcing partner to play a role in that process" but not rule it, says business consultant and former corporate training executive Douglas Harward. "[Because] when strategies are created together, the buyer owns it."

For complete text, see page 36.

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Consultants: The Trainer's Friend

Anver Suleiman

As a workplace learning and performance professional, your line of work often involves working with consultants. Anver Suleiman, executive director of the Independent Consultants Association, believes that those experiences provide a unique opportunity for you to help organizational leaders leverage the use of consultants. Following are some of Suleiman's suggestions.

Be a contact. Let management know that you can help them find consultants. You know who they are, where they are, and how they've performed elsewhere.

Get involved in the selection process. You aren't asking to be an approver; you just want to be available to provide input to help make the best choice possible.

Identify the training and people-related issues. Help the consultant understand the culture. Let him or her know of previous successes and failures.

Act as advisor. You can make recommendations to consultants on issues that might meet resistance and explain why they should modify a particular recommendation.

This isn't a complete list of Suleiman's suggestions; however, it does illustrate what you can offer to senior management to reinforce the value of the learning function in the overall strategic plan of the organization.

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Goin' Mobile

Diane Gayeski

The capabilities of the wireless world extend well beyond chatting with friends and surfing the Web; they present significant growth opportunities for the workplace learning and performance industry. The following five mobile applications hold particular promise for performance improvement:

- mobile needs analysis tools
- real-time, unplugged executive information systems
- portable training and performance support opportunities
- customer-enabling technologies
- location-tracking devices.

All of those high-speed applications enhance business productivity by unburdening employees and helping them to work smarter, not harder.

Managers, who often feel trapped behind their desktops deluged with on-line communications, benefit from the use of mobile devices. They can use them to deliver the same email, revenue and productivity statistics, inventory status reports, and forecasting data that employees receive via their desktops—thus, increasing their effectiveness as supervisors.

Handheld PCs now enable casino service reps to capture examples of good customer service instantly and empower organizations to display training in short, interactive tutorial sequences.

To “go mobile” yourself, invest in a handheld PC and explore how it can improve your WLP work.

For complete text, see page 46.

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Blended is Better

Balance Learning

According to a transatlantic survey of 150 U.S. and 118 U.K. learning professionals by Balance Learning Limited, a global provider of comprehensive blended learning solutions, blended learning is the delivery method of choice.

What’s involved in a blended solution? This survey shows that blended learning programs typically consist of

- instructor-led training
- custom e-learning courses
- workbooks and other print-based materials
- workplace assignments.

According to the survey, blended learning is viewed as the most effective and efficient form of training in the United States. The results show that 77 percent of U.S. organizations currently use blended learning and that it accounts for 16.1 percent of all training in the United States. Due to its popularity, U.S. use of blended learning is projected to double to 29.4 percent of all training by 2006.

Blended learning’s growth can be attributed to the need for organizational leaders to reduce participants’ time away from the job. Other factors, according to Chris Horseman, managing director of Balance Learning, include “how the learning will be transferred back to the workplace, trainer time commitment, the level of support required from each participant’s line manager, the delivery time frames, and logistics.”

For complete text, see page 52.

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