



e-Powering talent development

Rapid talent management has emerged as one of the major issues facing organizations in virtually all sectors of the economy.

Changing demographics - especially the imminent "retirement bulge" of experienced managers - and time pressures that often make off-the-job training next to impossible, are creating unprecedented challenges. Increasingly, leaders and managers at all levels are being put in situations where they have to "learn on the fly," upgrading skills and abilities without help or formal guidance because there is no time or convenient opportunity to attend an appropriate management course.

Successful talent development in these circumstances requires a new approach – one that can deliver on-the-job learning support *where and when it's needed*. It requires a "second generation e-learning strategy based on use of learning materials that have been specially designed for just in time learning with improved job performance in mind

Here are five ways in which the NewMindsets "second generation" approach has proven success in supporting rapid talent development:

- Job-based competency development
- Just-in-time informal coaching and mentoring
- Action projects geared to strategic and operational breakthroughs
- "Learn as you go" peer partnerships
- On-demand best practice exchange

NewMindsets can be used to develop unique web-based talent development strategies that include all five elements – with a clear return on investment along the way.

You get an instant "corporate-university style" resource to which you can add your own organization's "self-authored" material for targeted, high value competency development.

Through access to the right learning in the right place at the right time people can learn as they work and acquire the skills and competencies needed for individual and organizational success.

Here's more information on each of the five strategies:

- ***Job-based competency development***

“On the ground” skill development is a never-ending process. New and seasoned employees alike often need to upgrade their skills and problem solving as new issues or assignments come through the door for which there has been little advance preparation. These may take the form of leading a new team, orienting a new employee, managing in a cross functional environment, assuming the role of project manager for the first time, or just having to “pitch in” on urgent problems of the day.

On-line learning kits backed by user-friendly job tools and work supports help employees achieve ongoing competency development goals - by working on their immediate job problems! From day one new employees can be provided with the tips, tactics and information that will prove helpful in meeting upcoming challenges. Seasoned employees can move into new challenges knowing that they have online learning advice that can provide them with valuable support - as the need arises

- ***Just in time informal coaching and mentoring***

Informal coaching and mentoring can be very effective in helping to fill experience gaps and raise individual and team performance to a new level. But it can be time-consuming and will rarely generate maximum impact unless it is backed by learning tools and resources that allow the coaching advice to achieve immediate job results. This is especially important since many leaders and managers are now finding themselves being thrust in the role of an “instant coach” who is expected to provide “on the fly” advice to colleagues who need help, or as part of ongoing staff development activities.

Solutions to these problems and challenges can be found by using flexible, online learning tools that integrate work and learning to provide “instant coaches” with easy access to resources that can deliver targeted advice on a wide array of issues and job problems. These supports can also be used in a stand-alone fashion, as the need arises, The process makes efficient use of everyone's precious time and ensures that there is an action focus that will deliver meaningful results.

- ***Action projects geared to strategic and operational breakthroughs***

Action learning is a powerful strategy for tightly integrating learning and work. It has been used to help corporate teams tackle major strategic projects, as a proving ground for high potential leaders, and as a means where individuals and teams can find ways of learning-on-the-job in a positive and supportive environment.

Success can be greatly enhanced by providing access to just in time problem solving and project supports. Job-related online learning resources, powered by tailored project scenarios and case studies focused on the immediate challenges can help to create powerful action learning experiences and results. The approach has been successfully used to help high potential managers execute “stretch projects” as part of their organization's top talent development program, to support cross disciplinary project teams tackling shared organizational problems, and to enhance the impact and learning retention of classroom-based blended learning programs by supporting participants in applying their learning back in the workplace.



- ***“Learn as you go” peer partnerships***

Informal “water-cooler conversations and learning partnerships have for a long time helped to promote valuable information exchange and free-flow learning. The need for these informal processes remains strong, but is often diluted by the increased amount of virtual working and by downsizing, streamlining and time pressures that often diminish opportunities for face to face interactions.

In this environment ways need to be found of encouraging and supporting informal learning with job-related goals in mind. Peer-learning partnerships and “buddy systems,” supported by just in time job-focused e-learning, enable people to make positive contributions to each other’s work by learning together, regardless of where they are located. The approach can help tap the power of informal learning as part of routine competency development and in the search for significant breakthroughs on difficult problems.

- ***On demand best practice exchange***

The knowledge management movement has recognized that employee knowledge is a key organizational resource and that valuable experience, information and ideas can easily “walk out of the door” when people leave or move from one role to another. However, the movement has been much less successful in creating workable knowledge management systems, largely because they become unwieldy and difficult to use. Busy employees often just don’t have the time to put relevant knowledge into central knowledge repositories, or to get it out!

Desktop collaborative software offers new ways of capturing and sharing knowledge and insight “on the fly” as part of daily work routine. In combination with well-designed online learning supports, these systems can create focused “quick wins” through a sharing of best practices and high value tips and insights that avoid the overwhelming infrastructure of centralized knowledge management systems. The value of this approach can also be greatly enhanced by using the experience of retiring executives to create online scenarios, case studies and advice to support new generations of employees.

For further information on NewMindsets:

<http://www.newmindsets.com>

For further information on the NewMindsets approach to second generation e-learning:

<http://www.newmindsets.com/resources/2ndGenELearning.pdf>