



Workplace Trends And Leadership Resolutions For 2007

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With 2007 just around the corner, it seems only fitting that my last column for the year focus on examining some trends and resolutions for the New Year ... and beyond. Based on the findings of a variety of research reports, as well as my own experiences, some critical workplace trends and issues have come to light. These forces will influence learning and performance approaches, as well as the types of resolutions senior leaders (including CLOs) might make to deal with them successfully in the coming year.

Let's first look at some key changes that will affect learning and performance in the future:

Globalization: Organizations must continue to focus on building global operating capabilities, requiring the workforce to learn and perform without walls. Whether an organization is national, multinational, international or truly global in structure isn't really the key concern from a learning and performance perspective anymore — now, what really matters is that clients are becoming more and more global. This development requires that the workforce supports a wider variety of performance expectations and demonstrate greater organizational knowledge, market awareness and process management capabilities.

Workforce Shifts From Generation X To Y: Over the next few years, Gen Yers will enter the workforce in ever-increasing numbers. This influx will bring a variety of new learning and performance management expectations and challenges that will necessitate a change in perspective. Marked by an attitude of entitlement, Gen Yers expect to learn the way they want to learn, including when they learn and the types of learning technology/methodologies.

Technology: While technology certainly can be a learning and performance enabler, it also can negatively affect the learning process through such issues as the time and effort required to come up to speed regarding a new technology and resistance to learning through a technological application.

Outsourcing: Leadership decisions surrounding whether to grow and develop internal talent or to buy external talent capabilities will continue and

increase next year — 2007 will see an expanding emphasis on outsourcing a variety of traditionally internal capabilities. In addition, the outsourcing of learning and development efforts will continue to rise, resulting in smaller teams of internal human resource development practitioners that serve more as internal performance consultants that broker external consultants/suppliers as needed for targeted initiatives.

Workforce Loyalty Decline: Along with the increasing influx of Gen Yers into the workforce comes a continuing decline in the “loyalty factor” in organizations. As mentioned earlier, this new generation brings a greater desire to focus on personal passions rather than concentrating on developing a long-term career with an organization. Thus, determining where, how and on whom to invest from a learning and development perspective will be more important in order to leverage the “return” on a longer-term basis.

With any luck, these trends will provide you with some food for thought when making leadership-oriented resolutions for 2007. For example, some potential CLO-type resolutions to consider might include “taking the lead in 2007” by helping to:

- Define the organization's operating model in 2010 and beyond. For example, this could include but not be limited to projecting the future organizational structure, site/location strategy and core operating processes.
- Identify who will be the organization's “key customers” and what their expectations/purchase behaviors might be.
- Find emerging learning technologies and methodologies that are aligned with the operating model requirements of the future. Doing this will help forecast and prioritize “grow/buy” options from a learning and development, functional support perspective.

Clearly, taking the lead with some of the key resolutions described above will help your organization be better prepared to address the forces and trends affecting performance in the future, but it also will help position you and your role as CLO as a value-added business partner. Here's a toast to a successful 2007! ■

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