

Learning How to Learn

To BCG's network around the world,

These days, most of my conversations with business leaders are about topics that weren't on their radar ten years ago—whether it's climate, digital and AI, the reshaping of geopolitics, or new employee work models. We can't count on the past to prepare us for the future, and the pace of change is speeding up. This puts learning at a premium.

A new BCG article, [Reach the Next Level by Learning How to Learn](#), puts this concept into clear focus, pointing out that learning should be as basic a building block as any other fundamental system within an organization—as important as strategy, planning, innovation, and people management.

Building a learning system, the authors say, takes a two-step approach.

First, business leaders must be ready to anticipate the skills that will be needed and be able to guide the organization as it builds those skills at scale—many of them digital (including advanced analytics and AI).

Second, leaders need to find ways to make learning habitual within the organization, with digital reskilling and upskilling an ongoing, everyday process. The half-life of skills today is fewer than five years—not even three for digital skills.

I would add to these two essential steps a third, which I think makes the first two possible: leaders need to establish within themselves a mindset of continuous learning. To lead a successful company in the coming decade, you'll have to expand your own horizons, understanding, and imagination. That means having the humility, and even eagerness, to learn from others, beyond your direct reports, and from what you yourself get wrong along the way.

The article gives great examples of companies that have stepped up their learning game. Those that are getting this right are building a learning ecosystem built on five core components:

- A business-driven learning strategy
- A learning culture backed up by a well-resourced and agile learning and development function
- A personalized library of content
- Technology to analyze and assess the programs and their impact
- An experiential approach, taking learning beyond the classroom

This last point is particularly important for managers, who need to be focused not just on getting output from their teams today but also on embedding learning into everyday work, building approaches that enable people to grow to their full potential.

Because what we learn becomes outdated so quickly, organizations need to be able to activate continuous capability building, providing employees at all levels with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors they'll need down the road. Long-term success will depend on it.

You can find this article and related publications below.

Until next week,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rich'.

Rich Lesser
Global Chair

Further Reading



Reach the Next Level by Learning How to Learn

Companies that build advanced continuous-learning organizations can attract and keep the best talent—and create lasting competitive advantage.

[READ MORE →](#)



Three Steps to Turn Your Company into a Learning Powerhouse

Companies compete on their capacity to learn quickly—and building an effective learning ecosystem is essential to gaining advantage in this critical area.

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The Future of Jobs in the Era of AI

An in-depth analysis of the US, Germany, and Australia shows how technology will disrupt labor markets by 2030—displacing millions of workers but creating new opportunities as well.

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