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The Changing Role of Professional Development (or Is It Talent Management?) in Law Firms

Terri Mottershead

Change, change, and a little more change...

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) has brought into focus the importance of having the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time. The GFC, together with increasing globalization, technology-sponsored increased access to knowledge and segmentation of legal services, and the new and more influential position of in-house counsel, have all contributed to changes in law firm business models and consequent changes in staffing models.

Take that down one level and you can see the impacts reflected in a renewed focus on strategic and business planning, the elevated importance of capturing and analyzing data, new definitions of success that measure it by impact rather than tasks, and a new and evolving plethora of leadership/management skills and team roles in law firms.

We all know that people are a firm's greatest asset. The GFC and these other significant factors have created the perfect storm for firms to apply the same innovative thinking they have used in client relationship management to the recruitment, selection, deployment, development, evaluation, promotion, and compensation of their attorney talent.

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With this new or renewed focus on talent has come a new and renewed focus on those managing attorney talent: recruitment, diversity & inclusion, professional development, career management, performance management, and human resource departments/functions. In many firms, these departments have operated, and in too many firms continue to operate, in silos. Those firms have yet to understand or embrace the importance of an integrated talent strategy. In other firms, still in the minority, the dots have been connected between the firm's pipeline of client work and the need to have talent able to exceed expectations in the servicing of that work; they have adopted an integrated talent strategy.

This article will briefly re-visit the components of an integrated talent strategy (TS) and the difference between a TS and a competency-based development model for attorneys. It will focus mainly on the impact of these initiatives on the role of professional development in law firms, in particular, the evolution of the Chief Talent Officer role in

law firms, the key focus areas for this role, and why the role is a "must have" for all law firms.

The Components of a Talent Strategy

Every TS has the same mission statement: to proactively identify, develop, deploy, leverage, and direct each employee's skills and capabilities towards achieving the firm's business performance goals. This is usually broken down into four main components (Wheeler, 2009):

- The ability to attract and retain top performers (recruitment and career development)
- The ability to develop skills and competencies (practice benchmarks, competencies, work assignments, learning/training, and coaching/mentoring)
- The ability to engage, motivate, and excite employees so they want to continue to work at the firm (work assignments and career development)
- The ability to measure performance and provide feedback so the employee can continue to grow but also so those leading recruitment and professional development functions can make appropriate adjustments to their practices (performance management and career development, especially coaching and mentoring).

If a firm has an effective TS, over time it should see:

1. An increase in retention of top performers;
2. A decrease in time to "close the gap" from new to experienced attorney;
3. A decrease in lateral hires to bridge skills gaps;

4. Top rewards and promotions consistently going to top performers;
5. A culture of learning and innovation; and
6. A decrease in the time it takes to make and implement change decisions.

These factors are the key performance indicators (KPIs) of a TS. Where these indicators are not present or performance is not as expected, they act as a red flag that one of the TS components is not fully developed, requires additional attention, or needs adjustment. A TS without KPIs (and likewise a TS without priorities and goals) is like a wish list; you hope something will happen, but you are never sure if it actually will or if it has!

Talent Strategy and Competency-Based Development Models

A TS is about looking at talent from a 40,000 foot view. It looks at the markets (local and global) and practice areas pursued by the firm and identifies the skills and capabilities that will be needed to service clients now and in the future. It identifies trends, gaps, and ways in which the firm can acquire, train, or leverage talent to ensure it has bench strength and remains at the cutting edge of its practices. It focuses on talent that will be lost to attrition, reductions in force, and retirement and works on ways to navigate the change this brings to the firm and its culture, as well as the positive and negative impact this may have on morale, engagement, and motivation as individuals make career transitions.

There are many common touch points for a TS and a Competency-Based Development Model (CBDM) for attorneys. Both are founded on input/feedback from focus groups, surveys, behavioral interviews, and the like from clients, partners, and affected staff. Both seek to identify trends from this

information that connect the success of an individual to the business performance goals of the firm. However, where the TS continues to remain at the 40,000 foot level, a CBDM, usually supported by practice benchmarks, breaks the TS into operational or bite size pieces. A CBDM provides a framework comprised of processes, programs, systems, policies, protocols, measures, and methods through which day to day activities contribute person by person to the achievement of the TS. Put simply, a good CBDM implements the firm's TS. For this reason, it is critical that all CBDMs are reviewed regularly to ensure that the blueprint for success they seek to provide individual attorneys remains relevant and accurate with regard to the firm's business performance objectives.

The Emerging Role of Chief Talent Officer

The strategic importance of talent management and the role of Chief Talent Officer (CTO) are not well understood in law firms. Strategic talent management is more than recruitment, diversity & inclusion, human resources, professional development, or performance management. The role cannot be filled by someone who possesses the skills, even excellent skills, in any one of these departments. It may be that an individual in these departments has the relevant skills, but skills are not acquired simply by changing the title of someone working in one of these areas or by expanding the responsibilities of one department to all people-related functions within a firm.

A CTO is the CEO of a Talent Management Unit. He/she is the person firm leadership turns to for advice and counsel about whom to employ, deploy, retrain, or staff a secondment to deliver services in all the

markets in which the firm operates and/or to strengthen client relationships. The CTO has access to information that allows him/her to provide that advice and has a seat at the firm's strategic table. He/she works in close collaboration with firm leadership and other "C-Level" colleagues. The CTO is essential to the firm's realizing its strategic vision because that depends upon the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time! In short, the CTO is an internal consultant and trusted advisor on the attorney workforce profile and deployment.

The CTO skill set is wide and varied. He/she needs to be able to run a business unit but also have a deep understanding of the legal industry, law firms, and lawyers. The skill set noted below is well within the grasp of many experienced professional development and human resource directors, but the role is likely to require some additional study and experience, too. The CTO skill set includes:

- Advanced experience and skill in running a business or business unit (governance structures, staffing, budgeting, managing people, marketing, and communication plans)
- Proven track record in achieving results
- Advanced experience in developing and implementing improvements
- Advanced experience and skill in organizational development (TS is all about making the firm more agile, adaptable, flexible, and efficient)
- Advanced experience and skill in change management (the TS is all about change and change is all about the TS)
- Advanced experience and skills in attorney recruitment, career development (including coaching and mentoring), learning/training, and performance management

Chief Talent Officer Key Focus Areas

1. Build understanding, support, and buy-in of firm leadership, PGLs, partners, other "C-Level" support staff
2. Build understanding, support, and buy-in of associates
3. Define Talent Strategy, business priorities, and goals
4. Identify, engage, and listen to key stakeholders (firm leadership, PGLs, other "C-Level" support staff, associates, and clients)
5. Focus on retention and development of top performers
6. Focus on getting the attorney staffing skill set and availability to fit the firm business model (full-time, part-time, flex time, contract, etc.)
7. Create collaborative and inclusive partnerships as a trusted advisor
8. Communicate, communicate, and then communicate a little more!

- Demonstrated track record of working at a senior management level
- Demonstrated track record in working collaboratively with senior management, pro bono, diversity & inclusion, marketing/business development, and information technology
- Advanced knowledge and experience in career management, learning management, and performance management systems and databases
- Deep understanding of the legal industry, law firms, lawyers, and legal work

- Global work experience and knowledge in one or more of the areas noted as well as a high degree of cultural competency (globalization is the future of the legal industry).

Some Thoughts on the Future

Change is often daunting and uncomfortable, but it is also often rewarding. For as much as the legal industry is undergoing change, so too is the professional development profession. It makes sense – how can our industry change around us while we stand still? We have not always viewed ourselves as being part of a profession. Perhaps it is because people come to professional development from so many different starting points. Perhaps it is because we run so hard and so fast each day supporting the careers of others that we have not had a chance to think about where our own careers are heading.

Whatever the reason, it seems this perfect storm, the changes happening in our firms and the renewed focus on attorney talent, may have also resulted in a convergence of

demand, need, and opportunity. That should give us pause to think innovatively about what we do, what we contribute, and where we go from here.

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How can you *Switch* your approach to change?

A book review

Karen Febeo

Change is all around us. As professional development leaders, developing and implementing change initiatives have become part of our daily routines. We drive innovation within a profession that traditionally resists change. The legal market has shifted. In this new world, there is more client pressure on value, efficiency, and cost certainty. We have limited resources and are asked to do more. And we do not always have the power or influence we would like.

In this environment, how do we accomplish anything? Enter **Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard**, by Chip and Dan Heath. In **Switch**, the Heath brothers provide a framework for change that is intuitive and informative. They use storytelling and case studies to exemplify how attention to three key elements of implementing change leads to great success. Applying this framework in your organizations can help you achieve real change, too.

The **Switch** framework starts with the powerful analogy of driving an elephant, which is a difficult thing to do. It requires a rider with a clear idea of where to steer the elephant, an elephant that is motivated to go there, and a clear path for the large elephant to travel.

According to the Heath brothers, changing things when change is hard is much like driving an elephant. In order to effect change, you must “direct the rider” (the rational side), “motivate the elephant” (the emotional side), and “shape the path” (provide clear direction for the next step). The rider on the elephant (rational side) thinks he has control, but if the elephant (emotional side) wants to do something, the elephant will win that battle.

For example, we all know that it is unhealthy to eat junk food, and our rational side will

try to talk us out of it. But, when we get home after a long day at the office, we are hungry for dinner, we see the Doritos or M&Ms on the counter, our emotional side takes control, and we reach for the bag and indulge in a not-so-healthy snack. That’s the elephant taking over.

Motivating the Elephant

In professional development, it is our business to analyze problems thoroughly, brainstorm with our colleagues, and present logical, rational solutions. We hope that those solutions, with our well-documented business cases, will be enough to create change. Yet time and again, we find our efforts are not as successful as we would like, often because people simply do not change the way they behave, even if logic and good business sense irrefutably prove they should.

What can we do differently to be more successful at creating change? The Heaths suggest that instead of spending so much time analyzing and thinking, we need to help people literally to see what the issue is and help them emotionally feel the impact of it. Taking from John Kotter, the Heaths explain that you cannot move from Analyze – Think – Change. It is much more effective to use an approach based on See – Feel – Change. Dan Heath explains, “Feeling is the fuel of change and it is our job to find the feeling.”

A case example from **Switch** illustrates this point. Working for a large manufacturer, Jon Stegner believed his company was wasting a lot of money because its factories were purchasing 424 different kinds of gloves from different suppliers, and all were negotiating their own prices. Some factories were paying \$12 more than others for the same pair of gloves. Instead of using a

PowerPoint presentation and a spreadsheet to show that centralized purchasing would save millions, Stegner had a student collect a sample of each of the 424 different gloves and tagged each with the price paid. He gathered all of the samples and piled them on a table in the boardroom for the company's executives to see.

This simple exhibit caused an immediate emotional reaction among the executives and helped to motivate the change Stegner was seeking. The company changed its purchasing process and ended up saving a lot of money. Stegner's approach caused the visceral reaction necessary to motivate the executives to make the change actually happen – to “motivate the elephant.”

Shaping the Path

As the Heaths explain, the elephant is a source of enormous strength if we can appropriately motivate it. That being said, motivating the elephant alone is not enough. After motivating the elephant, it is still important to provide a clear path so that people are not overwhelmed by what direction to take. You need to make the path to change as easy as possible to follow.

The Heaths emphasize the importance of “shaping the path” and providing a clear direction for people to implement change. This can take the form of tweaking the environment and eliminating obstacles of which we may not even be aware. The Heaths tell the story about a consultant, Peter Bregman, who helped a management consulting firm with the challenge of consultants not using their new online tool for recording their time. The company held training sessions on the new tool, and then mandated use of the tool, yet compliance was still only at 50 percent. The company was frustrated and ready to announce that consultants would not receive their paychecks if they did not use the online tool. (This might sound familiar to those of us whose firms impose fines or penalties for delinquent time entry.)

Bregman advised against using such a “stick.” Instead, he investigated why consultants were choosing to use paper time sheets over the online tool. His discovery was instructive. There was a “wizard” built into the online tool intended to help people, but in practice it annoyed the consultants and served as an obstacle. Armed with this feedback, the firm removed the wizard and within a short period of time everyone was using the online tool.

Think about how we can apply this structure for problem solving to our worlds. Investigate why people are resisting the change and evaluate if there is anything you can do to remove any obstacles.

Finding the Bright Spots

Another area where **Switch** is instructive is in reminding us to focus on the “bright spots” and how we can replicate what is working well. To emphasize how successful this can be, the Heaths tell the story of Jerry Sternin, who addressed the malnutrition of Vietnamese children in a village. Sternin gathered data, and instead of focusing on the macro issues (poverty, contaminated drinking water, etc.), he asked whether there were any places where the children were healthy (he looked for a “bright spot”), and he found one. Sternin compared what the mothers were doing in most villages (serving their children two meals – each a large bowl of plain white rice) to what the mothers were feeding the healthy children (four small meals of white rice with sweet potato greens and tiny shrimp – which was not traditionally fed to children).

Nothing here was out of the ordinary – this was something that all of the mothers could do. The mothers then learned from each other and this practice spread across villages, resulting in healthier children across many villages in Vietnam.

Applying the Switch Principles

How can we apply these principles to law firm professional development initiatives?

Let's apply the **Switch** construct to a very typical situation: how do we motivate busy partners to be more active and available mentors? How can we make the partners actually feel the challenges that result from a lack of active mentoring?

One possibility is to look at exit interview data to determine why attorneys leave their firms. If that data shows that departing attorneys do not feel the firm is invested in them, a lack of mentoring may be one of the causes. You could present this information to the partners along with a slide show picturing the high performing attorneys who have departed and their billable hours averages to show that there are talented people leaving the firm and the bottom line impact this has on the firm. What if you combined this with video clips of strong performing associates talking about how a particular partner has really made a difference in their careers and how they feel about the firm? You could also apply the lesson from the Stegner story and stack Monopoly money to show the cost of recruiting and training a replacement (approximately \$200,000). These are some ways to make the partners actually feel the impact of not taking the time to mentor associates.

Another **Switch** strategy would be to look for the "bright spots" – talk to associates who feel very engaged and have strong mentors. Find out why their mentoring relationships are so successful and try to replicate that. Is it because the partners are meeting with the associates on a regular basis? Is it because the partners are sharing information helpful to the associates' career development and advancement? You could also talk to partners who have been identified as great mentors and find out how they fit mentoring into their busy schedules. Is this something that others could do?

Finally, you can look for ways to make the change easier ("clear the path") for those who need to do better. Maybe you have an administrative person set up periodic lunches for the mentor and mentee. Perhaps you create an intranet site to share information to help the mentors more

effectively provide career guidance to the associates. You could also create an automated system for the mentors to share appreciation with their mentees so they can share positive feedback with the click of the mouse. Or you could send all of the mentors a recurring calendar appointment for Friday morning reminding them to check in with their mentee with a quick phone call or a hyperlink to their mentee's email.

As you can see, applying a few of the tactics from **Switch**, you can generate a lot of creative ideas on how to address an age-old challenge that many of us face.

After reading **Switch**, I find myself frequently trying to figure out how to "motivate the elephant," "clear the path," and identify "bright spots" when brainstorming how to implement change. My colleagues who have read the book do the same. **Switch** is impactful. It can be applied regardless of the type of change being contemplated.

If you are looking for a helpful way to approach challenging problems and to discover manageable solutions that can make a huge impact, take a look at **Switch**. You'll be happy you did.



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Choosing the Right Writing Specialist

Jill Ramsfield

Ken had been to three writing tutors, and his legal writing had not improved. Born in Korea, he had immigrated at age thirteen, so he was a fairly competent English as a Second Language (ESL) writer. An excellent engineer and patent attorney, he was admired at the patent firm where he had practiced for six years. His supervising attorneys were getting restless, however, because his work still needed thorough editing. Eager to have him stay, they had persisted in hiring tutors, but none had been able to make a difference.

Denise had been law review editor-in-chief at a top-ten law school. Her oral reports and research in securities law were excellent, but her writing was not. No one at the firm had been able to get her to write well. She was told that she needed a tutor and she was not happy about it, but she knew she had to perform better soon or find work elsewhere.

When I met these smart, frustrated lawyers, I could see we needed to roll up our collective sleeves and dig a bit more deeply into some writing history, experience, attitude, and technique. As often happens, there had been a superficial diagnosis of the problems. In Ken's case, the assumptions had been that it was his "English," that is, his grammar and usage. After two decades working with ESL lawyers, I could see right away that was not the problem, but I was not sure at first what it was.

Denise was so hopping mad to be sent to me that I could barely get through the first fifteen minutes of interviewing her about her current work, much less her past. She had always been a writing star, and she had no use for me. Both she and her supervising attorneys had reached such a level of frustration that no one could diagnose the problem.

Caught in an odd paradox, the harder Ken and Denise worked, the worse it got. Each was brilliant, talented, and capable, but their

evaluations labeled them "poor writers." Each was valued by the firm and encouraged to stay if they improved their writing.

Who could best help them? All attempts inside the firm had failed. Their professional development colleagues called me, and we succeeded, as noted below. Often assigning attorneys know that the writing is not good enough, but they struggle with articulating what that means, what is specifically the matter, or how to fix it, which is why a specialist is needed. We writing specialists offer an array of good services, but choosing just the right match for an individual can be challenging. This article offers guidelines for choosing the best provider for an individual's needs. While legal writing specialists use a range of titles, they are defined as follows for the purposes of this article: **tutors**, **coaches**, and **personal trainers**.

Writing Tutors

Writing tutors assess and analyze writing for clarity. Many tutors are not lawyers, so they focus on precision, conciseness, and structure, which can be tremendously helpful for lawyers whose writing is cluttered with nominalizations, passive voice, long sentences, undefined technical terms, legalese, and parenthetical citations. A good tutor should be able to help a writer use powerful verbs, create elegant transitions, or transform a sentence from A to B as follows:

A: *I am in receipt of your letter, which is in compliance with our request that you inform us of whether or not our legal services will be of value to you.*

B: *I received your letter, which informs me that you would like to use my legal services.*

Choose a tutor if you have a writer who is in the following situation:

- Doing well with legal analysis
- Meeting deadlines
- Doing effective research, but
- Struggling with refining the document's prose, or
- Needing minor corrections in English usage, such as the Chinese speaker whose subjects and verbs do not always agree. (ESL lawyers often need a deeper diagnosis, as explained in Ken's case, below.)

Good tutors are adept at using assessment tools and targeting specific problems identified by the tool, such as word choice, usage, grammar, large-scale and small-scale structure, transitions, concision, and overall clarity. A little of this tutoring can go a long way in creating transparent, readable legal prose. Often, however, what appears to be a surface issue runs deeper, and a specialist who has practiced law is needed.

Writing Coaches

In addition to looking at grammar and style, writing coaches assess the paper's scope, legal structure, audience, and context. Good coaches analyze legal writing in the context of the writer's particular practice. Coaches are usually both lawyers and experts in teaching legal writing, and they recognize that law and language are intimately intertwined. Properly woven, law and language convey clear analyses and results; tangled, they are indecipherable. The coach assesses the individual's mastery of law, structure, language, and analysis in the context of a particular practice group's expectations. For example, a tax lawyer may be using too much technical language for an impatient but worried client, or an environmental lawyer may be stuck in agency jargon.

Choose a writing coach when your lawyers need attention to the following:

- Translating technical terms while retaining accuracy
- Matching substantive law with structural coherence
- Using terms of art precisely
- Matching substantive terms with syntactical devices
- Refining headings for audience readability
- Writing well under pressure
- Balancing a range of projects to meet the practice group's expectations

A writing coach can help an individual adjust quickly and quietly to a range of expectations at the firm. Good legal writing coaches can not only assess the writer's current competencies but also define and develop techniques for writing well in a legal context. A writing coach can also analyze the writer's process, which can reveal issues in organization, time management, or collaboration methods. Coaches can considerably improve writing performance, particularly when individuals must adjust to changing demands. Some situations require more specialized attention, however, and a personal trainer is needed.

Personal Legal Writing Trainers

Personal writing trainers are specialists who analyze, specifically and holistically, an individual's complex competencies: talents, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, breakdown points, flexibility, endurance, and long-range capabilities. They diagnose causes of writing performance patterns and generate individualized training programs that tone and refine technique, improve stamina and efficiency, and refine the written process and product. Trainers are lawyers, experts in teaching legal writing in the context of law practice, and highly experienced troubleshooters who have trained individual lawyers at all experience levels.

Excellent individual performance depends on a creative fusion of many factors: research and writing history and training, experience, decision-making patterns, analytical

expertise, available resources, supervising attorneys' requirements, client demands, flexibility, and adaptability. Assigning attorneys may know what they want and that they are not getting it, but they may not know how to close the gap. A personal legal writing trainer can do just that: connect writer to reader by breaking down the essentials of excellent performance, putting in place highly refined techniques to meet those essentials, and boosting performance, as with Ken and Denise.

Ken's previous tutors had focused on English grammar, the surface ESL problems. But the real mental muscles that needed attention were deeper: they were cultural. He was writing patent applications as though he were still an engineer, expecting the partners to convert them into legal documents. I was the fourth person he had been sent to. As a legal writing personal trainer, I saw the problem after reading three examples. During our first session, I asked whether or not he wanted to become a partner. I had struck home. He was resisting joining the group because he perceived aspects of the firm's culture to be disrespectful from a Korean perspective. That resistance manifested itself in his stance: he would not take command of the legal analysis. The decision was his to make. Once he decided, his writing was transformed. He was a partner within a year, though he later moved to another firm.

Denise was suffering from law review disease. She was brilliant, but she was constructing her memos as though they were scholarly articles, using formulaic "roadmap paragraphs" that ironically misled her readers. She was importing features from one legal genre into another. Once I focused on securities law, particularly on matching the substantive law to her message and structure, her analytical brilliance emerged. She regained her confidence and returned to her prestigious position as a good writer.

Choose a personal writing trainer to diagnose sophisticated problems in a specific, practical setting. The personal trainer will match the individual's competency both to the firm's benchmarks and to the assigning attorney's expectations and help to resolve any inconsistencies. A good trainer will see this as a discovery process among the trainer, the assigning attorneys, and the writer.

Choosing the Right Writing Specialist

Generally, success depends on three factors:

- the firm wants to retain the individual,
- the individual wants to stay, and
- the individual is still getting good assignments to which new techniques can be applied.

If the firm has already decided the individual has to go, the writing specialist is severely constrained. So the earlier needs are identified, the better the probability of success. Put in place a process that is specific, regular, and focused on individual needs.

STEP 1. Check frequently with assigning attorneys and individual writers to identify needs. When a serious writing problem surfaces, add to any formal evaluations or assessments an informal one, such as a monthly email, phone call, or office visit to key people.

STEP 2. Assess the nature of the problem by talking with both assigning attorneys and the individual. Refer to the parameters defined in each section above, but feel free to leave the final diagnosis to the specialist you choose.

STEP 3. Interview the specialist. Look for practice experience, success in past consultations, flexibility in approach, and measures of success.

- What are your professional degrees and experience? (English credentials? Lawyer? Practiced law? Specialist for how long?)
- For whom have you worked? (A range of lawyers with different experience levels or mainly first-year associates? Highly technical law or generalist? Large firms or small?)
- What is your specialty area? (Conciseness and clarity (tutor), analytical structure and legal precision (coach), complex individual competencies (trainer)?)
- How do you factor in the firm's long-range expectations?
- What is your approach? (One session? Series of sessions? Diagnostic tool? Feedback? Consideration of assigning attorneys' needs and preferences? If so, how?)
- Particular strength? (Example of this?) Weakness? (Example of this?)
- Timeline?
- Cost?
- Follow-up method?

STEP 4. Write up and report to decision-makers with your recommendations. Emphasize the “match” between the specialist and the writer.

STEP 5. Hire and set up confidentiality parameters to protect both the individual's privacy and, as needed, attorney-client privilege. A good confidentiality agreement should do both, though some lawyers prefer both to have the agreement and to redact names from all documents.

Conclusion

Like good athletes, good lawyers need to stay in good writing shape. Without a personal trainer, many can become flabby writers; with one, they will become stronger, more flexible, and more successful. Tutors, coaches, and personal trainers all contribute ideas and approaches for achieving good writing. Choose the one who fits an individual writer's needs, the one with whom both writer and assigning attorneys are comfortable—perhaps the one you would want to work with yourself.



Jill J. Ramsfield, B.A., B.M., J.D., has created a unique approach to writing better and faster on the job. Since 1986, she has taught continuing legal education courses nationally and internationally; her clients include law firms, government agencies, judges, and magistrates. A Wellesley and University of Wisconsin graduate, she practiced

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Experts and Novices: How Do You Help Experts Share Their Knowledge More Effectively?

Adriano Pianesi

Accessing the knowledge of experts is critical in order to make informed decisions, communicate an organization's messages, or train effectively. But extracting specialist knowledge with the purpose of sharing it with non-experts is often a challenge. And some experts actually make a point to sound knowledgeable - and obscure - to novices, as a matter of ego, in this ignoring the basic fact that they actually come across as less knowledgeable when they talk above people's heads.

Once I worked as a trainer for a software company and my first task was to teach a class with the owner. I had a lot of ideas, but the owner seemed a little hesitant to use them. We taught a class together that day: I did the morning, and he did the afternoon. At the end of the day we asked participants simply to assess the expertise of the two instructors. Well, to my boss's surprise the class rated my level of expertise a 9 and only gave a 6 to my boss, the guy who actually wrote the software!

This little story exemplifies an important issue: even assuming a willingness to communicate for real understanding, knowing something well does not guarantee the ability to explain it to a novice in a way that can be understood. In fact sometimes - and this part is really troublesome for many - deep knowledge is an obstacle to communication to non-experts. How do we solve this dilemma and mix the right amount of expertise with the right ability to communicate it? And how do we motivate experts to bring an intention to really communicate when they address people with a lower level of knowledge?

Expertise comes from years of familiarity - and from a lot of opportunity, both formal and informal, to develop it. So, while experts

know their stuff and live in it like a fish lives in the water, they don't always know how best to share what they know in "laymen's terms." They are often unable to define what information is most essential for a novice.

We can relate to this, as we are all experts in some subject.

Think about that thing that you know very well. It is a software system? Or a topic you care deeply about? Imagine you have to explain it to somebody who doesn't know anything about it. How would you go about this? What would help you regain the "novice" perspective in order to make your expertise understandable? What can help you work with a beginner's mind?

One Key First Step

The first thing to do is to stop relying only on yourself and actually start asking for help. Asking questions to a representative of the audience that you will be talking to is the first simple thing to do to get out of this bind. If you are the expert, go seek someone who can help you get the perspective you are missing. Basically, you want to know what the audience knows or doesn't know about the topic, what it wants to know or needs to know for its own purposes.

I have been working a lot in e-learning and Electronic Performance Support Systems, and one key step of a successful e-learning project is the work with subject matter experts. In putting together a project on Records Management in the federal government, I needed to deal with records management experts. Sound sexy? Feel like running away? That's how I felt when I took the project on. But this is how I made it work.

The first thing I did was realize that I was the person who had to make the communication work better between two very different groups: the records managers (the experts) and the staff (the novices). I called a meeting with representatives of both and set up a space for them to get to know each other. I introduced them and shared the purpose of the meeting, clarifying that both groups were essential in order to make the records management project a success.

Then I asked: What have you learned about each other so far? What questions do you have about the project? The conversation revealed key assumptions about the work of filing and storing records and provided an excellent way to bridge the perspectives of both groups.

Three months later, we released an e-learning product that is not only widely recognized as effective but is also helpful in bringing the work of records management to the level of the person who actually has to do it. In fact, the project was so successful that the agency decided to rewrite its records management policies based on the issues raised in our meetings.

How many times have you played a similar role of bringing together two different groups for their own sake? How many times do you experience a disconnect between parties, due to the fact that they do not speak the same language or simply just don't know what the other knows or doesn't know. Getting together and getting to know each other is a key first step.

Three Activities to Foster Fresh Mindsets

When I have helped the experts come to a basic level of understanding about their audience, I continue my work with them by asking some critical questions that connect their knowledge to the day-to-day life of a less-technical audience. What follows is the description of three simple frameworks that can help you when you deal with similar challenges. You can run these activities in a focus-group format or individually.

- **“The Relevance Game”** is an activity that has always brought great results. I make sure the experts have met their target audience, and then I ask: **“Among all the things that you know, what does our audience need to know? What would people care the most about?”**

The question prompts a lively discussion and in some cases a few jokes. After a few minutes I list all the possible topics we could be discussing and select only the ones that the audience cares about the most.

Here's the rationale for this activity: what matters to your audience is a key criterion for selecting what truly needs to be shared vs. what would be nice to share. This line of questioning can be helpful to clarify that, at the end of the day, people want to know things that meet their goals.

- **“Info-Action-Results”** pushes experts toward a better understanding of what people will do with the knowledge they provide. With your expert, brainstorm all the new things your audience will be doing differently with the new knowledge. During the session, ask: **“What specific actions will your audience perform with the information you provide?”**

Rationale: having a sense of what use the audience will make of the expert's knowledge might help her become more focused on providing value. People understand specific actions better than abstract concepts; experts can keep people's attention on a complex subject with a call to action right up front. Making a compelling case in actionable terms for the audience will motivate people to follow with interest the expert's supporting evidence.

- **What's your theory?** This pushes the expert to turn his abstract ideas into clear, discrete pearls of wisdom. This activity is the most challenging but also the most rewarding. I declare boldly that the purpose of the session is to distill their knowledge into five easy principles

that they see in action over and over again in their areas of expertise. In other words, I ask them to generalize, identify a pattern, and discuss the different instances of that pattern in varied contexts. The trick is to identify principles that are generic enough without being banal and specific enough to be truly observable in more than one context.

The rationale for this work is that context is important to experts. Often, they offer all sorts of contextual nuances because their experience isn't based on black and white solutions. Instead, these nuances are based on variables that experts have learned to master over the years. However, for the rest of us at the early stage of knowledge on a given topic, it is very helpful to name a pattern or a principle and then see it in action – even in all its different instances and contexts.

Depending on the circumstances, the above questions could alternatively be answered in

an audience poll, and/or posed to the experts to aid their preparation for a training or mentoring situation.

Collaboration does not just happen!

Collaboration, especially for people with different expertise, does not just happen. Accessing the knowledge of experts is critical and often the simple willingness to do it is not enough. If you are looking to bring people together to solve complex problems and if you know that each party holds a specific frame of mind or complex expertise that is not shared, you need both a plan and careful planning. With simple, intentional frameworks that require relatively little time and energy - like the ones described here - you can harness and unleash the combined, collaborative potential of experts and novices to ensure the full creative potential of thinking, learning, and working together.



Adriano Pianesi is principal of ParticipAction Consulting, Inc. He brings 15 years of rich experience in the nonprofit, government, and private sectors to his work of teaching management skills and team collaboration. Adriano is a course development, facilitation, and e-learning expert. He has been facilitating effective online seminars since 2002. His clients include NASA, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, the National Labor Relations Board, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization of American States. He can be reached at a@pactionc.com.

The *Learning Lab* column will return in the August issue.

Manual for Talent Managers

Gaye Mara

Terri Mottershead, Ed., *The Art and Science of Strategic Talent Management in Law Firms*. 2010, West a Thomson Reuters Business.

This book is ambitious and impressive -- an all-encompassing sweep through every aspect of developing and managing lawyers in a law firm.

Roughly following the trajectory of a lawyer's career, the chapters cover:

- Law school curriculum changes
- Law firm competency models
- Legal recruiting
- Lawyer development, training, and mentoring
- Assignments, appraisals, compensation, and advancement
- Coaching and career development
- Alternative careers and work-life balance
- Outplacement, retirement, and succession planning
- Pro bono work
- Diversity and inclusion
- Change management
- Partner development
- Technology and social media

I liked so many things about this book:

The contributing authors (many of them past PDQ contributors) are well chosen. They are top experts in the field, and nearly all of them cover their topics as well and thoroughly as one could want. And, despite the content having been carved up among so many different authors, there is a good flow from one chapter to the next, a reasonably consistent style, and numerous cross-references from each to the others' work. Kudos to the editor and authors: For a

collection of this type, the book is exceptionally well integrated and consistent in quality.

Most chapters were the best treatment I have seen of their topics. In particular, the two chapters on technology (one on management applications and the other on social media) -- for which I did not have high hopes -- proved to be interesting, clear, and specific enough to be useful without getting down into the weeds of geekdom.

The many helpful forms and checklists make the book a practical resource in addition to being a conceptual *tour de force*.

Unlike most books for a law firm audience, this one brings its topic into the business mainstream. It makes good use of the copious management and training expertise available from the corporate world and translates them well to the law firm setting, without losing sight of the unique aspects of the legal environment.

My complaints are few:

The only coverage that seemed thin to me was in the chapter on legal recruiting. It especially needed a more in-depth explanation of competency-based interviewing, a new phenomenon in which firms, interviewers, and candidates all need a better grounding.

The production quality of the book is not on a par with the content. Reading it was unnecessarily arduous because of the dense spacing, heavy sans-serif type font, and complete lack of eye-friendly graphic design. Some of the chapters also needed a rigorous proofing; they were replete with the kinds of distracting errors that Spell Check won't catch but a human would. That is a shame in a work of such substance and seriousness.

This book is the complete and up-to-date resource we have all been waiting for. A copy

should be on the desk of every PD professional.

Book Review

Bite Like the Big Dogs

Gaye Mara

Ross Guberman, *Point Made: How to Write Like the Nation's Top Advocates*. 2011, Oxford University Press.

In *Point Made*, Ross Guberman deconstructs the writing of America's greatest litigation advocates and, brick by brick, shows us how they build a winning argument. Organized in five parts containing fifty numbered techniques, the book flows logically and lucidly from (1) crafting a theme and a powerful introduction ("The Theme"), through (2) explaining the facts and your client's story ("The Tale"), (3) detailing your legal argument ("The Meat"), (4) punching up your style ("The Words"), and (5) creating a strong conclusion ("The Close").

Each of Guberman's fifty techniques is bestowed a pithy, memorable title followed by a clarifying explanation - for example, Technique No. 12 in "Part Three: 'The Meat'" is captioned "12. Russian Doll: Nest your headings and subheadings." And each technique is illustrated by several excerpts from the pleadings of top advocates to illustrate the range of possibilities for using it. Many of the techniques are also supported by quotes from judges' writings on what helps them understand your case better vs. what irritates them or causes their eyes to glaze over.

The cases quoted from are interesting, if not historic, in their own right - from Thurgood Marshall's arguments in *Brown v. Board of*

Education to the *Exxon Valdez* damages case to Donald Trump's defamation suit against an author who dared to suggest that The Donald's fortune might be less sizeable than he claimed.

This is also the first work I've seen profiling "top" legal performers that gives minorities and women their due. Besides Thurgood Marshall, we are treated to superb writing by Elena Kagan as Solicitor General, Eric Holder from his time at Covington & Burling, Ruth Bader Ginsburg as an ACLU litigator, Barack Obama as a civil rights lawyer in Chicago, and Miguel Estrada, Mary Jo White, Kathleen Sullivan, Nicole Seligman, John Payton, Morgan Chu, Patricia Millett, Maureen Mahoney, Jamie Gorelick, Carolyn Lamm, Nancy Abell, and probably others I'm overlooking. Beginning lawyers of all backgrounds will find plenty of role models in this book.

The pointers in Part Four ("The Words") are helpful advice for all writers, not just lawyers. The 17 techniques in this section encompass everything from adopting more vivid language and imagery and using "Creative Punctuation," to creating a "Seamless Flow" from one idea to the next, to ensuring a document's "Visual Appeal" with tables, charts, bulleted lists, and even specific, eye-friendly type fonts.

This book practices what it preaches, and Guberman's lively, graceful writing and choice examples make an enjoyable excursion out of what from less skilled hands

would read like a textbook. Adding to the pleasure is the book's attractive formatting and stellar copy-editing.

Point Made is supplemented by four helpful appendices, a well-done index, and a web site, www.TheTopAdvocates.com. The appendices include brief biographies of the chosen advocates, a list of the 50 brief-writing techniques (which can stand alone as a refresher course after one absorbs the book's explanations and examples), and an annotated chart contrasting original and revised versions of Paula Jones's brief opposing summary judgment in *Jones v. Clinton* and keying Guberman's revisions to his 50 techniques.

But my favorite appendix is "Twenty Best Quotes from Judges." How about these zingers:

"Whenever I see a block quote I figure the lawyer had to go to the bathroom and forgot to turn off the merge/store function on his computer...." (Alex Kozinski, Ninth Circuit)

"The more paper you throw at us, the meaner we get.... (by the 20th page, we are muttering to ourselves, 'I get it, I get it. No more for God's sake')...." (Patricia Wald, D.C. Circuit)

Point Made should be required reading for every lawyer in a litigation practice. Judges will be grateful, and clients should get better outcomes.

(Note: *An abbreviated version of this review is published on amazon.com.*)

Quote of the Quarter:

"The methods firms have used to develop associates will not work for partners, because the goal is quite different. For associates, the primary goal is to develop the range of legal skills and expertise they need to function as fully grown lawyers, and no longer as apprentices. For partners, the primary goal is to expand their contributions to the success of the firm....
[P]artners are evaluated for their contributions rather than their competencies."

– Steve Armstrong and Tim Leishman in **The Art and Science of Strategic Talent Management in Law Firms**

Professional Developments

Events

Upcoming PD-related conferences, seminars, and workshops:

Legal Profession:

- 5/11-14/11, Palm Springs, CA. *LPM 2011 Spring Meeting: Law Is Changing. Are You Ready?* ABA Law Practice Management Section, www.americanbar.org.
- 5/17-18/11, Los Angeles, CA. *LegalTech® West Coast 2011*. American Lawyer Media, <http://www.legaltechshow.com/>.
- 6/9-10/11, Chicago, IL. *2011 Diversity Summit*. National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.
- 6/16/11, online. *Virtual LegalTech*. American Lawyer Media, virtuallegaltechshow.com.
- 7/30-8/2/11, Boston, MA. *ACLEA's 47th Annual Meeting*. Association for Continuing Legal Education, www.aclea.org.
- 9/21/11, New York, NY. *2011 Lawyer Development Institute: Essential Partner Skills for the New Economy*. National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.
- 9/21/11, New York, NY. *2011 Lawyer Development Institute: Essential Partner Skills for the New Economy*. National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.
- 12/8-9/11, Washington, DC. *Professional Development Institute 2011*. National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.

General Audience:

- 5/3-5/11, Saratoga Springs, NY. *Video for Learning Lab & Seminar*. Masie Center, www.masie.com.
- 5/16-18/11, Saratoga Springs, NY. *Learning Essentials Lab & Seminar*. Masie Center, www.masie.com.
- 5/22-25/11, Orlando, FL. *ASTD 2011 International Conference and Exposition*. American Society for Training & Development, www.astd.org.
- 6/7-9/11, Fairfax, VA. *Learning Without Limits: 7th Annual Innovations in E-Learning Symposium*. Defense Acquisition University and George Mason University, <http://innovationsinelearning.gmu.edu/>.
- 6/14-15/11, Las Vegas, NV. *LeadershipDev 2011 Conference on Leadership Development & Training*. Masie Center, www.leadershipdev.com.
- 6/27-28/11, Boston, MA. *Telling Ain't Training*. American Society for Training & Development, www.tat.astd.org.

- 9/21-22/11, Atlanta, GA. *Telling Ain't Training*. American Society for Training & Development, www.tat.astd.org.
- 10/4-5/11, Chicago, IL. *Learning 3.0 Conference*. Training magazine, www.TrainingMagEvents.com.
- 11/6-9/11, Orlando, FL. *Learning 2011*. Masie Center, www.masie.com.

Certificate and Degree Programs

American Management Association, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) Certification Program, www.amacourses.com (4 days. See the website for dates and locations.)

American Society for Training & Development, Certificate Programs, www.astd.org (see the website for online and/or on-site dates and locations for each topic.):

- Action Learning Certificate (2 days)
- Advanced Designing Learning Certificate (2 days)
- Analyzing Human Performance Certificate (3 days)
- Blended Learning Certificate (2 days)
- Business Essentials Certificate: Strategy, Finance, Marketing (3 days)
- Career Planning and Talent Management Certificate (2 days)
- Coaching Certificate (2 days)
- Consulting Skills for Trainers Certificate (2 days)
- Creating Leadership Development Programs Certificate (2 days)
- Creating New Supervisor Training Programs Certificate (2 days)
- Designing Learning Certificate (3 days)
- Designing Online Learning Using Rapid Prototyping Certificate (2 days)
- E-Learning Instructional Design Certificate (2 days)
- Essentials of Adult Learning (2 weeks, online only)
- Facilitating for Excellence Certificate (1 day)
- Facilitating Organizational Change Certificate (2 days)
- HPI (Human Performance Improvement) in the Workplace Certificate (3 days)
- Managing Organizational Knowledge Certificate (2 days)
- Managing Talent for Mission Success Certificate (2 days)

- Managing the Learning Function Certificate (3 days)
- Measuring and Evaluating Learning Certificate (3 days)
- Multimedia for Instructional Designers Certificate (2 days)
- Presentation Skills Certificate (2 days)
- Project Management for Trainers Certificate (2 days)
- Rapid Learning Techniques Certificate (2 days)
- ROI Skill Building Certificate (2 days)
- Selecting HPI Solutions Certificate (3 days)
- Test Design and Delivery Certificate (2 days)
- Training Certificate (3 days)
- Training Certificate Plus! (4 days)

Clark Certification Programs, www.clarktraining.com:
Online only. Check the website for available dates for:

1. E-Learning Certificate:

- Needs Assessment for Performance Technologists: Tools and Techniques
- How to Plan, Design, and Evaluate e-Learning
- E-Learning and the Science of Instruction

2. Instructional Systems Design Certificate:

- Needs Assessment for Performance Technologists: Tools and Techniques
- How to Plan, Develop, and Evaluate Training
- Building Expertise: How to Apply Learning Psychology to Instructional Design

George Mason University Leadership Coaching for Organizational Performance Certificate Program, Fairfax, VA. A one-semester program consisting of 5 in-person course modules of 2-3 days each approximately once a month, supplemented by distance learning and independent work between modules. The Fall 2011 class schedule runs from October 11-February 16, Spring 2011 from February 22-June 15. Each includes:

- Course Module I, Leadership Coaching Foundation
- Course Module II, Creating Awareness
- Course Module III, Coaching Skills
- Course Module IV, Coaching Skills in Action
- Course Module V, The Process and Business of Coaching

www.ocpe.gmu.edu/programs/org_dev/leadership_coaching.php.

Ithaca College Online Professional Certificate Programs, Ithaca College, www.ithaca.edu/gps/professional_programs. Two-week online sessions in:

- Performance Improvement Management
- Strategic Communication Management
- Sustainability Leadership

Training Live+Online Certificate Programs.

www.TrainingLiveAndOnline.com. Upcoming online courses in:

- Producing Great Podcasts (begins 5/3)
- Designing E-Learning with Captivate (begins 5/10)
- Leading Effective Live Online Events (begins 5/10)
- Instructional Design: Performance-Based and Results-Focused (begins 5/11)
- Story-Based Design: How to Engage and Inspire Your Learners (begins 9/22)
- Audit and Benchmark Clinic: Get Your Training Function Running on All Cylinders (begins 9/27)
- Training Coordinator Certificate: A Consulting Approach to Coordinating the Training Function (begins 10/4)
- Project Management for Learning Professionals: Reduce the Rework (begins 10/5)
- The Art and Science of Test Design and Delivery Clinic (starts 10/13)
- E-learning Design: Effective and Economical Design and Development (begins 10/13)
- Assessment and Evaluation Clinic: Focus Your Efforts and Prove Your Worth (begins 11/3)
- Social Media for Trainers (begins 11/14)
- The Brain Science Clinic: Using Six Principles to Make Training Stick (begins 11/15)
- Scenario-Based E-Learning (begins 11/29)

American Society for Training & Development CPLP Certification: Certified Professional in Learning and Performance. This is a comprehensive program consisting of approximately 10 weeks of coursework, a knowledge-based examination, and submission of a qualifying work product. It addresses the nine areas of expertise identified in the ASTD Competency Model for workplace learning & performance professionals:

- Designing learning
- Delivering training
- Improving human performance
- Measuring and evaluating learning
- Facilitating organizational change
- Coaching

- Career planning and talent management
- Managing the learning function
- Managing organizational knowledge

www.astd.org/content/ASTDcertification/.

University of Pennsylvania Executive Education for Chief Learning Officers. Penn's Wharton School and Graduate School of Education, in consultation with the training industry, teamed in 2006 to create an executive education program for Chief Learning Officers. In December 2010 the program was redesignated PennCLO and draws faculty from across the University. The program "meets for two separate weeks each semester, allowing students to continue working while they study" and offers "a blend of on-site classes, distance learning, and 'field'-based projects" in six course blocks:

1. Strategic leadership
2. Workplace learning
3. Business acumen
4. Evidence-based decision making
5. Technology for work-based learning
6. Dissertation (for EdD candidates)

Students in the program may pursue a master's or doctoral degree from Penn's Graduate School of Education.

<http://pennclo.com>

Villanova University Master of Science in Human Resource Development. A two-year online master's program, offering courses in

- Organizational change
- Human resource planning
- Compensation
- International human resources
- Organizational training
- Project management

www.VillanovaU.com/MHRD.

George Washington University/Hildebrandt Institute Master of Professional Studies and Graduate Certificate in Law Firm Management.

The Master's curriculum is a two-year, 30-credit, blended learning program consisting of two 12-credit segments (Law Firm Management and Law Firm Leadership), and a 6-credit

Independent Research Project. Each 12-credit segment begins and ends with an on-campus residency period in Alexandria, VA, with 4 months of online distance learning in between. The 12-credit segment in Law Firm Management may stand alone as a Graduate Certificate.

nearyou.gwu.edu/sfm/index1.html. (See article describing this program in depth in our February 2011 issue.)

News

Milbank Tweed and Harvard Law School are collaborating on a PD program for midlevel associates in years 3 through 7, called Milbank@Harvard and held on campus in Cambridge. The associates will spend 8 days there each year to study business principles. Firm Vice Chairman Scott Edelman says the program will "involve every associate in the firm and a commitment over a period of years." (Karen Sloan, "Milbank sending mid-level associates to Harvard." *National Law Journal*, 2/10/11.)

A University of Colorado law professor takes the law schools, U.S. News & World Report, and even NALP to task for continuing to inflate **employment statistics for law school graduates**, even after USNWR's recent downward revisions in response to criticism. While NALP reports 88.2% employment nine months after graduation, and 62.9% in full-time legal jobs, Paul Campos believes that the number of graduates with "real legal jobs nine months after graduation" is below 45%. Based on his own review of individual NALP forms, he says that "fully one-third of those graduates who report they are working in full-time jobs that require a law degree are in temporary, rather than permanent, positions," including such things as "being paid \$20 an hour to proofread financial documents in a warehouse." He adds,

If you're a law professor and you want to get depressed, try to figure out how many of your recent graduates have real legal jobs that pay enough to justify the tuition that funds your salary, and also involve doing the kind of work they wanted to do when they went to law school.

(Paul Campos, "Served: How law schools completely misrepresent their job numbers." *The New Republic*, 4/25/11.)

Fortune Magazine's **100 Best Companies to Work for** in 2011 include 4 law firms, all of which are repeat honorees and most of which have moved up the rankings. Congratulations to:

Alston & Bird (ranked 13, up from 30)
Bingham McCutchen (28, down from 12)
Baker Donelson (50, up from 77)
Perkins Coie (55, up from 75)

To be eligible for consideration, a company must have 1,000 or more U.S. employees.

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/bestcompanies/2011/index.html>

The American Psychological Association presented 8 organizations, including one law firm, with **Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards** for their programs and policies in the areas of “employee involvement, health and safety, work-life balance, employee recognition, and employee growth and development.” Arkansas law firm Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus was a winner in the Small For-Profit Category. <http://www.phwa.org/awards/national/winner/34>.

The April 4 *Wall Street Journal* reported on a study by McKinsey & Co. of the **barriers to women’s advancement** in major corporations. In 2011, the number of female chief executives in Fortune 500 companies declined to 11, from a 2010 high of 15; and women make up only 15% of Fortune 200 executive committees. The problem begins at the middle management level: “Even a 25 percent increase in the ranks of middle-management women reaching the next level ‘would significantly alter the shape of the pipeline.’” “Entrenched attitudes” appear to cause women to be placed in jobs that make them less promotable and, over time, less hopeful and less ambitious for advancement. (Joann S. Lublin, “Coaching Urged for Women.” *Wsj.com*, 4/4/11.)

Professional services giant Deloitte LLP is opening an employee learning and leadership development center, **Deloitte University**, this year in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The 100-plus-acre campus, hotel, and conference center in Westlake, TX “will be the place where Deloitte professionals meet, learn together and develop as leaders, and where we share experiences that last a working lifetime. It will be a powerful catalyst for life-long learning and help foster our talent growth both personally and professionally,” according to an April job posting on a recruiting site.

Early education for the professions? K-12 education in Singapore seems to be taking a different direction than in the U.S., according to an interesting and detailed 2010 press release of the Singapore Ministry of Education. The Ministry will “implement a new framework to enhance the development of 21st century competencies in our students,” including an increased emphasis on art, music, and physical education as contributing to physical vigor and personal expression. The new program’s four Desired Student Outcomes include:

“[A] confident person who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively.”

Sounds like the very person we’re all trying to hire. (“MOE to Enhance Learning of 21st Century Competencies and Strengthen Art, Music and Physical Education.” <http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/press/2010/03/moe-to-enhance-learning-of-21s.php>.)

Resources

The Connected Business: an FT Special Report looks “at the ways in which **IT & technology** are changing the face of human resources.” The topics covered include talent management, HR portals, social media, data mining and analytics, and mobile applications. Available from the *Financial Times* at <http://www.ft.com/cms/0aa251dc-68a8-11e0-81c3-00144feab49a.html?ftcamp=traffic/email/content/reportalert/memmk>.

Knowledge@Wharton, an e-publication of U. Penn’s Wharton School, considers the pros and cons of **performance reviews**, and their harmful consequences in the many organizations that do them poorly. The article includes an interesting case study of SAS, a privately-held software company that two years in a row has scored No. 1 in Fortune’s 100 Best Places to Work. Under a new VP of HR, SAS implemented an appraisal system only in the past decade, after resisting having one for many years, and seems to have done it right. (“Should Performance Reviews Be Fired?” April 27, 2011, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=2760>)

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