

# Seven Steps to Building a High-Impact Learning Culture



## Employees increasingly value a workplace that nurtures learning. But what, exactly, is a learning culture—and why does it matter?

The new generation of employees entering the workforce has grown up in a world of constant change and innovation. Employees want to learn continually, and expect their employers to value and nurture their potential. The global, mobile, transient nature of this new workforce makes it easy for employees to jump ship to organizations that offer more opportunities for growth and development.

To become the kind of employer that attracts and retains talent, organizations need to create a high-impact learning culture. Here's an overview of what that means—and the seven steps toward building it.



## What is a high-impact learning culture?

Most HR professionals know that a culture of learning is important to the health of the organization. But few can say why—or even define what it means to have an effective learning culture.

A learning culture is a set of organizational values, conventions, processes, and practices that encourage individuals—and the organization as a whole—to increase knowledge, competence, and performance. “High impact” simply describes the idea that the learning culture positively impacts business results. In other words, it makes a difference.

## Why does it matter?

High-impact learning organizations (HILOs) are better at things like skills development and talent development. According to a study by Bersin & Associates, “High-Impact Learning Culture: The 40 Best Practices for Creating an Empowered Enterprise” (June 10, 2010), HILOs that have a strong learning foundation in place tend to significantly outperform their peers in several areas:

- They are **32 percent more** likely to be first to market.
- They have **37 percent greater** employee productivity.
- They have a **34 percent better** response to customer needs.
- They have a **26 percent greater** ability to deliver quality products.
- They are **58 percent more** likely to have skills to meet future demand.
- They are **17 percent more** likely to be market-share leader.

## How do you get started?

Culture is easy to talk about but hard to implement. The High-Impact Learning Culture model from research firm Bersin & Associates describes seven steps to start building a high-impact learning culture.

- 1.** Make learning part of the organization's strategic success. Integrate learning with talent management in support of capability development.
- 2.** Make a belief in learning a part of the organization's culture of leadership. Use leadership-development programs to encourage leaders and management to take ownership of the learning culture.
- 3.** Make full use of captive audiences. Use required training activities to prove the value of learning by making it worthwhile and interesting for learners.

- 4.** Make a great first impression. Use onboarding programs to encourage employees to take personal responsibility for learning and to demonstrate the organization's commitment to development. Some HILOs have onboarding programs that start as early as the talent-acquisition phase and continue through all talent-management processes. Such an approach can demonstrate an organization's commitment to learning, helps recruits hit the ground running, and personally benefits the individuals.
- 5.** Make work educational. Use embedded learning approaches to maximize experiential and reflective learning. Embedded learning allows people to reflect on how they learn by putting them to work on real business problems.
- 6.** Make knowledge-sharing an organizational habit. Institutionalize knowledge-sharing by incorporating incentives and opportunities into every learning and performance-management process.

- 7.** Make performance management a driver of development. Redesign performance-management processes to give at least equal weight to coaching and development. Coaching can be a low-cost but highly effective way to improve performance. You know coaching is working if an annual performance review takes just 15 to 20 minutes because you're merely confirming the documentation of something you've talked about all year.



## Fit your learning culture to the business strategy.

Different organizations will have a different focus depending on business strategy. For example, organizations that want to excel in product innovation should place more emphasis on empowering employees. Companies that place a priority on high employee productivity should focus on building trust. All of these practices add significant value, but it's important for leaders to select the right practices according to their business strategy to build a high-impact learning culture.

### Contact us.

For more information, visit [oracle.com/hcm](http://oracle.com/hcm).

