

SEVEN
TRENDS
in CORPORATE
TRAINING *and*
DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIES TO ALIGN GOALS
with EMPLOYEE NEEDS

IBRAIZ TARIQUE

Ph.D., Industrial Relations and Human Resources

Praise for
Seven Trends in Corporate Training and Development

“With his extensive background, knowledge, and experience on the subject of training and development, it is no surprise that Ibraiz Tarique has written a book that marries T&D theory and practice to the new ways we learn today. Ibraiz brings a discerning eye to emerging trends and reveals how to leverage them into successful programs. *Seven Trends in Corporate Training and Development* should be on the bookshelf of every training and development professional—and those aspiring to become one.”

—**Ellen Weisbord**, Professor, Academic Director Executive MBA Program,
Lubin School of Business, Pace University, New York

“In his book *Seven Trends in Corporate Training and Development*, Dr. Ibraiz Tarique examines the importance of the intrinsic learning capability of individuals, as well as the extrinsic environments in which they perform. His multidimensional approach to learning offers insights that can be used to examine the influences of individual development. The understanding and consideration of both dimensions transforms the way in which programs are not only designed, but even more importantly, how they should be supported as students are tasked with leveraging new skills and knowledge they have learned in the classroom. This book is a must-read for any professional involved in workplace training and development.”

—**Lindamarie Wertz Coatman**, Human Resources Executive

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Seven Trends in Corporate Training and Development

Strategies to Align Goals with
Employee Needs

Ibraiz Tarique, Ph.D.

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*This book is dedicated to my father, Asif Tarique,
who is my role model, source of my wisdom,
and whom I love very much.*

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Dr. Tarique is the coauthor of *International Human Resource Management: Policies and Practices for Multinational Enterprises*, a comprehensive textbook that provides a foundation for understanding the theory and practice of international human resource management. He is also the coauthor of *Strategic Talent Management: Contemporary Issues in International Context*. This book examines the topical issue of talent management from a strategic perspective.

Dr. Tarique teaches HRM courses at four levels: executive MBA, regular MBA, MSc in HRM, and undergraduate HRM.

Preface

The trends that influence workplace training and development are changing in significant ways:

- The *knowledge economy* is growing and becoming an inevitable part of the modern business structure.
- Jobs are becoming more fluid and specialized.
- Knowledge turnover is now rapid and becoming a new reality.
- The aging of the workforce is creating a need to develop new sources of talent.
- The proliferation and access of knowledge on the Internet have given rise to the greater demand for the ability to discern fact from opinion.

These trends, among others, are changing the way people learn and making investments in employee training and development more critical in determining the success of an organization than it has been in the past.

This book provides insights into the challenges arising from the top seven most significant trends affecting training and development today, offering tangible suggestions for practice to address those trends.

The motive for writing this book was to provide a simple, easy-to-read coverage of the seven trends affecting training and development. The concepts, ideas, and suggestions offered in this book provide a clear picture of the challenges facing the training and development function and the type of training and development practices that are needed to develop today's employees.

This book is divided into three parts. Part I, "The Changing Context," includes three chapters and sets the scene for the seven trends. Chapter 1, "Forces Shaping the Corporate Learning Function,"

describes forces such as globalization, workforce demographics, changing job structures, and hybrid career paths. Chapter 2, “Adult Learning and Development,” covers important definitions and terminology. Chapter 3, “The Art of Knowledge Acquisition,” describes the various types and levels of knowledge (for example, tacit versus explicit) and the various ways adults search for information and why these information-seeking skills are as important as learning.

Part II, “Emerging Trends in Training and Development Practices,” describes the seven most significant trends affecting training and development today. This part includes seven chapters (Chapters 4–10). Chapter 4, “Technology-Based Learning,” discusses the first trend. This chapter discusses how technology influences knowledge acquisition, access to information, learning styles, and various methods of delivering and sharing instructional content. Chapter 5, “Informal Learning,” examines the second trend. This chapter examines the importance of informal learning in contemporary organizations and explains why this form of unsystematic and unstructured type of learning is becoming popular. Chapter 6, “Customized Learning and Learner Control,” focuses on the third trend. It describes customized learning, what customized learning is, the importance of customized learning, and how learner control is related to customized learning. Chapter 7, “Continuous Learning,” describes the fourth trend. It discusses the importance of continuous learning in organizations and describes why this type of learning is becoming popular. Chapter 8, “Learning and Development Through Teamwork,” concentrates on the fifth trend. It discusses how teams work, the traits that make team members effective, and the importance of collaborative learning. Chapter 9, “Extreme Development: Stretch Assignments and Learning Agility,” examines the sixth trend. This chapter describes the importance of work experiences that contain *stretch* and how stretch assignments are one of the best ways to develop critical thinking, which has become the new imperative. The chapter then describes the concept of learning agility and discusses why the concept is important to

employee development. Chapter 10, “The New Experts,” examines the seventh and final trend. This chapter describes what expertise is and how it is developed and maintained in the context of new changes in the business environment.

Finally, Part III, “Strategic Directions for Training and Development,” includes two chapters. Chapter 11, “Investment in Workforce Learning and Development,” describes why it is important to view employee training and development in terms of investments, the different kinds of investments, and the various methods to evaluate the effectiveness of investments in human capital. Chapter 12, “The Future of Training and Development,” provides perspectives on the field, its progress, its prospects, and possibilities for the future.

You will notice that the chapters vary in length and scope. A major reason for this variation is the development of the specific field and the level of complexity in each area.

This book can be used in a variety of ways. This book can be used by human resources management professionals involved in training and development of employees, with positions such as trainer, director of learning and development, director of talent management, chief learning officer, and HR training manager.

This book can also be used as the main text in college courses that focus on training and development and as a supplement to a traditional introductory course in human resources management.

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1

Forces Shaping the Corporate Learning Function

What's in this chapter:

- The corporate learning function
- Globalization: global workplace and a borderless workforce
- Talent management: a surplus of workers and a shortage of required competencies
- Workforce segmentation: various employee groups
- Careers: hybrid careers and fluid jobs
- Learning technologies: continue to evolve

The learning and development industry in the United States is a multibillion dollar industry.¹ Successful organizations use the learning function to increase efficiency and improve their competitiveness. Organizations that focus on learning share certain characteristics, such as having a corporate culture of learning, a commitment to employee development, a strong belief that performance can be improved through learning and development, and a continued investment in training to ensure a supply of a fully qualified workforce for the future. Examples of such organizations include UPS, Verizon, and Hilton Worldwide.²

The Corporate Learning Function

Human resources management refers to a set of policies and practices that an organization uses to manage its workforce. The *corporate learning function* is part of the human resources management that is responsible for making sure that employees have the competencies that are required for successful job completion. *Competencies* refer to the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and behaviors. More specifically, the corporate learning function is responsible for the instruction, maintenance, application, and transfer of competencies.

- **Instruction:** This refers to providing employees with needed competencies to perform their jobs successfully while supporting the organization's goals and strategy.
- **Maintenance:** This refers to helping employees preserve learned competencies.
- **Application:** This refers to helping employees continuously put to use learned competencies in the job environment.
- **Transfer:** This refers to the transfer of competencies from one person to another, from one person to a group, from one group to another, and so on.

The mechanisms or tools that organizations use to instruct, maintain, apply, and transfer competencies are called *training* and *development* activities. Training activities focus more on solving short-term performance concerns; that is, training provides competencies employees need in their current jobs. Developmental activities, in contrast, focus on competencies necessary to fulfill a strategic need in the future. Table 1.1 provides examples of training and development activities.

Table 1.1 Examples of Training and Development Activities³

Examples of Training Activities	Examples of Developmental Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity training • Safety training • Sexual harassment training • Computer training • Team training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotational developmental programs • Global teams • Graduate or executive-level university coursework • Mentoring and/or coaching • Workshops, seminars, and conferences • Stretch assignments

The corporate learning industry is going through rapid change, growth, and development. Today, more than ever before, there are many forces affecting the corporate learning landscape. These forces are generating intense pressure on organizations to keep pace with a set of new norms for managing the learning function. Specific forces impacting the corporate learning landscape are discussed next.

Globalization: Global Workplace and a Borderless Workforce

Most organizations, large and small, are involved in some form of international business activities. Larger organizations such as multinational enterprises like Apple, Inc., and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like the United Nations have affiliates in various regions and countries that employ people from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.⁴ Table 1.2 provides a snapshot of the extent of globalization in the United States.

Table 1.2 Extent of Globalization in the United States**Employment by U.S. and Foreign Multinational Corporations (MNCs)⁵**

- 34.5 million workers are employed worldwide by U.S. multinational companies.
- 22.9 million workers are employed by U.S. parent companies in the United States.
- 11.7 million workers are employed abroad by majority-owned foreign affiliates of U.S. MNCs.
- 5.6 million workers are employed in the United States by majority-owned U.S. affiliates of foreign MNCs.

Import and Export Trends⁶

- 83,050 companies both export and import goods.
- 219,210 companies only export goods.
- 100,910 companies only import goods.

Labor Force Characteristics of Foreign-Born Workers⁷

- The U.S. labor force includes 25.0 million foreign-born persons. They represent 16.1% of the total labor force.
- 48.3% of the foreign-born labor force is composed of Hispanics; 23.7% of the foreign-born labor force is composed of Asians.

Languages Spoken in America⁸

- 60.6 million people (age 5 and over) speak a language other than English at home.
 - Examples of languages include Spanish (37.6 million), Chinese (2.9 million), Tagalog (1.6 million), Vietnamese (1.4 million), French (1.3 million), German (1.1 million), and Korean (1.1 million).
-

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration

As Table 1.2 indicates, for most U.S. companies and for most international organizations, involvement in international labor and product markets is likely to grow rapidly in the coming years. As organizations increase their international activities, they face two important challenges:

- **Managing a global workplace:** A *global workplace* consists of individuals from a variety of cultural, geographic, and racial backgrounds who interact and collaborate with one other.
- **Managing a borderless workforce:** A *borderless workforce* includes individuals who have international job responsibilities and are dispersed geographically, virtually, and across countries and regions.

In a global workplace with a borderless workforce, cross-cultural and ethnic differences can influence how individuals interact with one another, approach differences and conflicts, and solve problems. Misunderstandings and miscommunication are unavoidable. The learning function has the responsibility of providing *cross-cultural competencies* that enable individuals to understand cross-cultural differences as well as appreciate the characteristics and benefits of multicultural and multilingual diversity that exist in a global workplace with a borderless workforce.

Types of Cross-Cultural Competencies. Cross-cultural competencies can be cultural-general,⁹ cultural-specific,¹⁰ region-specific, and megacities-specific:

- Cultural-general competencies provide an understanding of how countries and cultures differ in general and the impact of these differences on individual behavior. Examples include the general dimensions on which most cultures differ such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation.¹¹

- Cultural-specific competencies provide an understanding of a specific country or culture, such as a country's language, customs, diversity, history, and geography. In addition, cultural-specific competencies provide language skills.
- Region-specific competencies focus on how and why organizations strategically view particular countries such as those represented in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, and BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) nations as one market.
- Megacities-specific competencies focus on large metropolitan areas. A megacity is defined as a metropolitan area with a total population in excess of ten million people. There were 23 megacities in 2011, and the number of megacities is projected to increase to 37 in 2025.¹² Examples of megacities include New York City, Mexico City, London, Moscow, Karachi, Delhi, Tokyo, and Jakarta. Another implication of a global workplace and a borderless workforce is the need to localize the learning function. A country's culture and economic ideology can influence how individuals learn and how they view the training, educational, and learning process. A single approach to training and development may not work in every region or country. As such, in certain regions and countries there can be pressure to localize the learning function to comply with local values, laws, and regulations. Corporate learning professionals must make the effort to understand local laws, practice, level of employee skills and knowledge, and employer obligations to improve the probability of achieving required learning and development objectives.

Talent Management: A Surplus of Workers and a Shortage of Required Competencies

Talent management refers to an approach that organizations use to attract, develop, retain, and mobilize employees who are most valuable and important to their strategic success, both domestically and internationally. *Attraction* entails putting policies and practices in place to recruit and select talent. *Developing* includes policies and practices that provide talented individuals with work and career-related competencies. *Retaining* refers to developing policies and practices that deter talent from leaving an organization. *Mobilizing* includes implementing policies and practices that facilitate movement of talent across regions and countries.

An important notion behind talent management is *talent shortage*, which occurs when employers cannot find skilled individuals in the workforce to fill positions. As Table 1.3 indicates, talent shortages are a serious concern for many organizations in a majority of countries in times of economic prosperity, as well as in times of economic uncertainty and economic/financial recession. For many organizations, especially in the service sector, shortages become severe across a wide range of positions when economic conditions improve.

Table 1.3 Top Five Countries with Talent Shortages

2011 ¹³	2012 ¹⁴	2013 ¹⁵
1. Japan	1. Japan	1. Japan
2. India	2. Brazil	2. Brazil
3. Brazil	3. Bulgaria	3. India
4. Australia	4. U.S.A.	4. Turkey
5. Taiwan	5. India	5. Hong Kong

Source: ManpowerGroup's research on Global Talent Shortage

There are three important reasons why employers have difficulty sourcing or finding talent:

- **There is a gap between the competencies applicants have and those that are needed to be effective:** This can occur when job requirements change rapidly or when there is a mismatch between the competencies that employers require and what the workforce can provide.
- **There are few or no available applicants:** This can happen when there is not an ample supply of talent to meet labor demands. In certain industries and occupations such as health care, demand for talent is growing at a faster pace than the availability of talent.
- **Organizations use rigorous selection procedures to screen out external candidates:** When selection criteria are too stringent or when organizations are risk-averse with respect to hiring external unknown talent, they face hiring challenges. Ultimately, the organization's focus is more on developing existing employees.

In the context of talent shortages, the challenge for the learning function is to ensure that the organization is developing current employees for future roles and positions. Providing training and development to current employees is a popular strategy used by most organizations to retain talent.

Workforce Segmentation: Various Employee Groups

Workforce segmentation refers to the process of identifying distinct groups of employees and designing human resources practices for each group based on their unique needs and characteristics. Segmentation can be done in many ways depending on an organization's business and human resources strategies.

Generational-Based Workforce Segmentation

Demographic trends in the United States are changing and will continue to do so during the next four decades. There are now five generations of employees with their own unique work-related values and attitudes toward learning and career development:

- **Traditionalists (born between 1922 and 1945)**
- **Baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964)**
- **Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980)**
- **Generation Y or Millennial (born between 1981 and 2000)**
- **Generation Z (born after 2000)**

Table 1.4 highlights each generation's work values.¹⁶ Attitudes toward learning are discussed in detail in Chapter 6, "Customized Learning and Learner Control."

It is estimated that the 55 years of age and older age group will total 97.8 million in 2020, which means that the group will comprise approximately 28.7% of the resident population; in 2010, this number was 24.7%.¹⁷ This age group, referred to as baby boomers, is not retiring at traditional retirement age. Hence, they continue to work or seek work. In general, they work for a considerable length of time after reaching retirement age. For the baby boomer generation in particular, retirement age is viewed as fluid. In instances such as this, the role of the learning function is to minimize any adverse reactions to these workers by managing positive and negative biases toward them in the workplace.¹⁸

Table 1.4 Work-Related Values and Attitudes

<p>Traditionalists Born between 1922 and 1945 Ages: 68–86</p>	<p>Experienced the Great Depression, World War II, and several societal and economic changes during their lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value job security and hard work • Tend to be thorough, formal, and loyal to their employers • Comfortable with stability; respect chain of command and institutional hierarchy
<p>Baby boomers Born between 1946 and 1964 Ages: 49–67</p>	<p>Grew up during a period of relative prosperity, safety, and optimism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value compensation and monetary benefits • Tend to embrace the social ideology of live-to-work and view work as a vehicle to financial wealth and success • Favor individualism and expect to be rewarded for good performance
<p>Generation X Born between 1965 and 1980 Ages: 33–48</p>	<p>Grew up surrounded by financial, economic, and social insecurity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the mentality of live-to-work and not overly loyal to their employers • Tend to be individualistic, goal-oriented, self-reliant, unstructured, impatient, informal, and results-driven • Comfortable with challenging the status quo
<p>Generation Y or Millennials Born between 1981 and 2000 Ages: 13–32</p>	<p>Grew up in an era of technological advances and changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated by jobs that provide growth, flexibility, mobility, and a sense of purpose and meaning • Comfortable with multitasking, change and innovation, and prefer instant and real-time feedback • Value social responsibility and environmental concerns
<p>Generation Z Born after 2000</p>	<p>Are growing up in a world that is highly connected, interactive, uncertain, and open</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are curious, globally focused, impatient, and social-media savvy • Comfortable with big data, gamification, real-time virtual communication, and multitasking • Desire mobility, pursue entrepreneurial endeavors, and embrace change and abstraction

Conversely, when baby boomers do retire (and for those who have retired), the loss of knowledge and experience they take with them is cause for concern for many organizations.¹⁹ The role of the learning function here is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from older workers to other workers in the organization.²⁰

Diversity-Based Workforce Segmentation

The U.S. workforce is becoming more diverse and will continue this pattern in the coming years. According to recent data, approximately 16% of the labor force is Hispanic, 12% is African American, and 5% is Asian.²¹ It is estimated that the proportion of people of color participating in the workforce will continue to increase as the United States becomes more racially and ethnically diverse.²² In addition, immigration is now a core source of labor supply and strongly contributes to the racial and ethnic makeup of the U.S. workforce.²³ It is estimated that 16% of the labor force is foreign-born (16 years old and over)²⁴ and current trends suggest that immigration will only increase, making the U.S. workforce culturally and linguistically diverse. Finally, women make up 47% of the labor force and their labor force participation has grown dramatically over the past few decades and will continue to do so.²⁵

Talent-Based Workforce Segmentation²⁶

Here, the focus is on categorizing employees into *A*, *B*, and *C* players based on the assumption that employees who add more value to the organization should be treated differently.²⁷ The most talented employees who have the most significant impact on the organization's business are categorized as *A* players (also known as high potentials). *B* players are talented employees who perform consistently and satisfactorily. *C* players are poor performers who are considered a liability; they are most likely to be separated from the organization. Using this

approach, employees can also be categorized in terms of strategic/nonstrategic and core/noncore.²⁸

An important challenge for the learning function is to manage, motivate, train, and develop each group differently.

Careers: Hybrid Careers and Fluid Jobs

Organizations, careers, and jobs are changing at a rapid pace and are having a profound impact on how we work, where we work, and with whom we work. In the past, organizations were hierarchical, stable, predictable, and bureaucratic. Jobs were defined narrowly and functionally. Careers were stable and career paths were clearly defined. Most people remained on their jobs for a long time and there was job security. People mainly moved within an organization. An important assumption in terms of the employer-employee relationship was that the employer would provide stable and continued work in exchange for the employee's loyalty and good performance. Now the picture is much different. Organizations are flatter and decentralized with less hierarchy and bureaucracy. The employer-employee relationship is short term and transactional. There are fewer opportunities for career and job advancement. This has resulted in *hybrid careers* and *fluid jobs* (see Table 1.5).

Table 1.5 Characteristics of Hybrid Careers and Fluid Jobs

Hybrid Careers	Fluid Jobs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely competitive and entrepreneurial • No guarantee of a career in any given field • Frequently changing industries, occupations, and jobs • Declining loyalty and commitment to the employer • Skills and knowledge provided to employers on a temporary or contractual basis • Multiple career paths are common—employees can simultaneously work for multiple employers • Career success means different things to different people • People manage their own careers • Generating multiple sources of income is a norm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work organization guided by a set of specialized tasks, projects, or skills rather than a function or jobs • Job security no longer guaranteed or assumed • Real-time measurement of work performance occurs • Employees' work can be tied to the bottom line • Work from anywhere, anytime, using videoconferencing and other mobile technologies • Increasing virtual collaboration—significant time spent working in virtual teams • Increased demand for complex cognitive skills • Freedom to move from one project to another

In the context of hybrid careers and fluid jobs, there are two important challenges for the learning function. First, as the nature and structure of employment continues to change, the demand for continuous learning to prepare employees for rapid change increases. Competencies can become obsolete in a short period of time. The challenge is to continuously develop a workforce. The second challenge is the extent of development—how much development is enough? Employee mobility seems to be rising, which makes it more difficult for organizations to retain employees after development.

Learning Technologies: Continue to Evolve

Learning technologies continue to advance exponentially and have come a long way in the last few decades. Social networking, mobile learning, gaming, virtual reality, and cloud learning have improved access to content, reduced instructional time, increased the amount of content available to learners, reduced the cost of delivering training, increased collaboration between instructors and learners,²⁹ and increased the importance of the learning function within the organization.³⁰ Two interrelated themes have emerged over the last several years.

Learning Is Portable

Learners are not location-bound—they can now access content at their convenience, remotely, anywhere and anytime. They can connect with subject matter experts and collaborate with one another instantly and in real time. Further, they can access information on demand from Web-based database systems and progress at their own pace.

As jobs become more fluid, there is likely to be a gap in the competencies (that is, knowledge, skills, ability, behavior, and personality) that employees need to be effective. Therefore, learning is now an integral part of most jobs. Learning technologies allow employees to determine what is needed at any given time, as they are provided access to content and instructors at their convenience.

Learning Is Virtual

Virtual learning refers to technology that allows instructors and learners to connect with one another when they are separated by time and physical distance. Essentially, virtual learning has replaced

traditional, face-to-face instructor-led learning, and technologies such as the Internet and learning portals are used to deliver content and courses to learners. Learners can use online learning communities to collaborate with other learners and subject matter experts.

Virtual learning technologies can also allow risk-free learning. Simulations and gaming provide learners a risk-free learning environment to practice and apply the learning that they have learned to real-life scenarios. These learning environments can mirror actual work environments.

Finally, virtual learning technologies allow learners to obtain real-time feedback and reinforcement. Real-time learning and performance data can be collected during and after learning activities and can be organized, stored, and retrieved by instructors when and as needed.

Overall, the technologies that have emerged during the past decade have the potential to revolutionize how organizations design, deliver, and evaluate learning activities and experiences. Selected technologies are discussed in Chapter 5, “Informal Learning.”

Summary

This chapter presented the corporate learning function in the context of the rapidly changing learning landscape. It illustrated how several challenges are generating intense pressure on the corporate learning function to keep pace with a set of new norms for how organizations develop human resources. These challenges include globalization, talent management, workforce segmentation, hybrid careers and fluid jobs, and learning technologies. These challenges, among others, are changing the way people learn—and making investment in employee training and development more critical in determining the success of an organization than it has been in the past.

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