

## BUILDING LEADERS

# DATA FLUENCY AND YOUR HIGHEST PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS



Probability has long been the distinguishing factor between physical and behavioral sciences. In physics, force equals mass times acceleration – every time! If you know how much a baseball weighs and how fast it travels when your granddaughter throws it while playing catch in the driveway, you can accurately determine the force the ball had when it shattered the windshield of your car.

Consider the difference between that scenario and determining the relationship between your organization's leadership training efforts and business outcomes. You must first come to terms with the fact there is no uniform standard of measurement. Frustrating though it may be, evidence produced to evaluate the impact of training in the past may not be relevant predictors moving forward.

In a world with an intimidating abundance of information available, your first challenge is to distinguish the data that matters from the data that might be interesting from the data that really doesn't tell you much. From our perspective, we consider data fluency the ability to connect the dots along a continuum flowing downward from results through habits and leading indicators to the learning itself.

### RESULTS

What is the bottom-line impact of training? This has always been a tough question for learning leaders. Primarily because there are many intervening variables, and they are next to impossible to isolate. It's such a tough question that many consistently high-performing organizations avoid

it altogether. The costs associated with confirming their belief that learning is embedded in achievement of corporate goals are simply too high.

In short, we agree. If you are in a set of circumstances where you must sit down with your chief financial officer and definitively project a return on this year's investment in training, may the force be with you!

### HABITS

Charles Duhigg discussed the potential of keystone habits in his best-selling book "The Power of Habit." A keystone habit is a measurable pattern of behavior with the clear potential to increase the likelihood of achieving desired results. Duhigg asks readers to take safety as an example. If you can get employees in a manufacturing organization to become laser focused on safety, it impacts communication, accountability, efficiency and more.

Clearly establishing, continuously improving and relentlessly measuring the connection between the learning function and keystone habits defines the depth of data fluency in an organization.

### LEADING INDICATORS

Long before a change in behavior becomes a habit there is a predictable ebb and flow in achieving mastery. That development is primarily governed by reinforcement provided by the manager of the trainee. The quality of that reinforcement is a product of the manager's proactive inclusion in the learning event.

Organizations that are serious about connecting learning to habits collect data that measures the degree of synergy between the primary stakeholders who navigate that ebb and flow (trainer, trainee and manager).

**HOW LEARNERS FEEL AFTER THEY HAVE COMPLETED TRAINING CAN TELL US A LOT ABOUT THEIR PROPENSITY TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR.**

### LEARNING

It appears, the more sophisticated our measurement capabilities have become, the greater the tendency to discount the impact of Level 1 feedback. We would caution against that. How learners feel after they have completed training can tell us a lot about their propensity to change behavior and develop new habits moving forward.

It will never be as straightforward as a baseball crashing through a windshield, but if learners feel good about the learning event and are connected to a stream of ongoing reinforcement intended to build keystone habits, the learning function will have the highest probability of ongoing success. 🔄

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