

SESSION 11 LEARNING



IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING

- Throughout this module, we have emphasized the fact that people are an organisation's assets. They are the organisation's competitive advantage.
- But it is not the people per se, but the knowledge, skills and abilities in the people that are what organisations value.
- Learning develops the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people.
- Learning is also an important aspect of managing change at the work place.

LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

- "...learning organizations are organizations that are continually enhancing their capacity to create.....people can potentially operate in ways that are fundamentally more generative, empowering, and inspiring than the ways in which we normally operate."

Peter Senge

LEARNING DISABILITIES

- While it is easy to talk about learning and its importance to organisations and individuals, we must be wary of learning disabilities that get in the way of learning.
- Senge in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, identifies 7 learning disabilities common in organisations.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

- I am my position.
- The enemy is out there
- Illusion of taking charge.
- Fixation on events.
- Delusion of learning from experience..
- Myth of the management team.
- Parable of the boiled frog

SINGLE-LOOP VS DOUBLE-LOOP LEARNING

- Single-loop can be seen as surface level learning. In single-loop learning, the individual compares his achieved outcomes with the expected outcomes and try to adjust towards the expected outcomes. Typically, when a learner tries to do exactly what the instructor teaches, that is single-loop learning.
- Double -loop learning is seen as deeper-level learning where the individual questions the fundamental values and policies behind an action. The individual tries to understand why he is learning something and not just what he is learning.

DOUBLE-LOOP LEARNING & REFLECTIVE LEARNING

- When one fails, one may start to question his/her earlier assumptions and examine what leads to failure. Such reflective learning from a failure is double-loop in nature.
- While double-loop learning entails deeper learning, it is not necessarily always better than single-loop learning. There are situations where single-loop learning will suffice. It is about the appropriate learning approach in a given situation.

DEFENSIVE ROUTINES

- While one can learn from failures, it is also common to see that when a fault or failure or weakness is highlighted, people who are seen to be responsible for it, come up with ways to avoid blame or embarrassment. These behaviours are called defensive routines.
- As a consequence, defensive routines are detrimental to both individual and organisational learning.

FIVE LEARNING DISCIPLINES

- Learning organisations are characterised by 5 disciplines which help them to manage learning disabilities and truly embrace learning.
- The 5 disciplines are:
 - Building shared vision
 - Personal mastery
 - Mental models
 - Team learning
 - System thinking

STRUCTURE & CULTURE INFLUENCE LEARNING

- Organisations that are true to learning will realise that the learning attitudes and mindsets of its employees hinge on the broader organisational culture and structure.
- Leadership and management play a critical role in developing a learning organisation through the way the organisation is structured and the kind of organisational culture they nurture.

UNLEARNING, RELEARNING, REFRAMING

- Learning is not just about adding new contents. It is also about selectively getting rid of outdated and incorrect contents.
- Therefore unlearning and relearning is just as important as learning.
- In the chapter on diversity, we see how important it is to reframe diversity in order to learn about diversity.
- Very often we learn new things just by reframing old things.

IMPLICATIONS

- One important point to note is that this chapter on learning interfaces with many of the earlier chapters.
- And as you will see in the next chapter, learning is also key to career development.
- In other words, learning is so important as it is relevant to many aspects of organisational life.
- But as the saying goes – you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. You have got to want to learn in order to truly learn. You take charge of your learning. What we learn, how we learn, why we learn, they are part of our self-concept.