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LEVEL UP YOUR WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE STRATEGY

How Dojos Transform the Organization's Learning Culture

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Change Agent

As organizations embrace innovative approaches to learning, they pave the way for a future-ready workforce capable of navigating the challenges of the digital age.

Achievement Unlocked: How Dojos Can Power Up Your Workforce

In the evolving landscape of today's professional world, the pressing need for continuous skill development has become paramount. The rapid pace of technological advancements, digital transformation, artificial intelligence (AI) and the swift adoption of cutting-edge technologies has created a dynamic landscape where organizations and their workforces struggle to bridge. But that hasn't stopped investment. In fact, U.S. training expenditures passed the $100 billion mark for the first time between 2021 and 2022.

Rapid advancements in technology have outpaced the traditional methods of skill development, leaving professionals with the requisite skills. As organizations adapt and implement new technologies, their workforce must keep pace with the evolving demands. This gap not only hinders innovation but also leaves organizations vulnerable to the next disruption.

Bridging this divide requires a multifaceted approach, including robust training programs, strategic collaborations with educational institutions and a shift in the organizational culture to foster a growth mindset. The ability to learn, unlearn and relearn has become a crucial skill, enabling organizations ability to harness the full potential of emerging technologies and to adapt to the dynamic landscape of the digital era.

$100 billion
U.S. companies are missing in 2022

$1.1 billion
jobs expected to be transitioned by technology over the next decade*

Any IT professional will tell you that training is an ongoing endeavor, essential for seasoned professionals and employees who are just entering the workforce. Recognizing the strengths of this foundational approach, we are committed to enhancing and extend its impact through our dojo approach.

Complementing knowledge solutions
Training gives learners an expanding knowledge base. The dojo can reinforce this knowledge by applying it within practice, allowing long-term retention and application.

Extending learning opportunities
Training provides foundational knowledge. The dojo serves as a complementary platform, allowing for continuing learning and in-hand learning.

Broadening inclusive learning
Training introduces concepts to a diverse audience. The dojo complements training by providing practical, hands-on experiences that cater to different learning styles and backgrounds.

Enhancing applied learning opportunities
Training imparts critical theoretical knowledge. The dojo enables learners to apply this theory in real-world scenarios, bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical application.

By recognizing where traditional training concludes, the dojo seamlessly takes the baton, offering an environment for learners to apply, practice, and perfect the skills and concepts they have acquired. This dual approach not only solidifies the knowledge base but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where individuals continue effectively and innovatively within their roles.

At the heart of this transformative approach lies the concept of "Kaizen". The dojo establishes a foundation for technical excellence, with a focus on technology strategy, execution, cloud, DevOps, security, data and analytics, automation, cybersecurity, governance, and explanatory work in artificial intelligence. Drawing inspiration from the traditional Japanese training spaces for martial arts, modern dojos in the tech industry provide a dedicated environment for learners to immerse themselves in hands-on experiences and collaborative problem-solving tailored content. This adaptation of dojo culture proves pivotal in creating an atmosphere conducive to skills acquisition and mastery.

> An organizations embrace these innovative approaches, they pave the way for a future-ready workforce capable of navigating the challenges of the digital age.

Market Perspective

We explore part of a white paper from IT Revolution that provides perspectives on what organizations should consider.

Navigating Barriers to Change

There are many barriers to changing an organization's learning culture. Leadership plays an important role in that transformation.

Here, we have Q&A with IT REVOLUTION on what organizations should consider.

Q&A

Why is culture and leadership important?

It is commonly accepted that leadership must create a culture of experiment, collaboration and experimentation. As Peter Drucker is every attributed as saying, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

It's critical that you focus on leadership behaviors and fostering a culture to ensure that the organization can thrive as it moves to the technical. Gene Dekrdja principles such as collaboration and empathy are necessary when an organization is trying to accelerate its ability to derive highly reliable value to customers continually.

What is culture and leadership?

Effective leadership is critical to the success of any transformation, in this context, leadership includes technology executives, business executives and middle management. In the interviews, we asked what was done to align these different stakeholder groups and what specific behaviors were critical to leadership.

Leadership is frequently discussed topic in the DevOps community. The teams that are actively driving and learning constantly adapt and improve effectively when you are optimizing your organization for speed often require a significant cultural change. These are a lot of great tactics in the DevOps Handbook that can help you do this. Gene and Kevin have spent the last decade or two at DevOps Enterprise Forum where they have been leveraging its rigorous and grounded thought leadership to bring together a community of practitioners and leaders who are actively working to drive change in their organizations.

How do dojos enable culture change?

Some of the dojos I saw in action include various elements:

- **Space:** You can create a space to specifically foster openness, collaboration and learning. Any dojo requires a safe and supportive but and engaging environment that inspires creativity. Create learning spaces that encourage different groups to come together, share and share learning with each other. Gene Kim talks about the importance of "Communities of Practice" and how this may be working at a different company day to day but different experiences they have in the dojo.
- **Process:** You can create your processes in the dojo to get teams together to learn and practice new processes. The dojo can be a safe space. Provide experiment, fail and learn in an environment where such actions are explicitly allowed and encouraged.
- **Coaches:** Dojo coaches are often cultural experts and evangelists. They are the people who have been with the company for years, know the company well and are well positioned to guide participants through the things they need to do to change. They also become a copy of the teams in the dojos and coach management on what they need to change to enable and empower their teams.

How the dojo enable culture change?

Gene Kim has a great talk on how dojos create culture.

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Our Perspective

This section leaders Prakanya Choudhary, from Dell, gives Scrum Master Lopez shares their insights of role in the dojo model, transforms the organization's learning culture.

Leveling Up Amidst Change

Advancements in technology business models and work methodologies significantly influence a company's foundation their progress. While transformations introduce new technology, the absence of the right talent to drive growth remains a significant challenge. Organizations must prioritize talent development and development programs that foster new skills, behaviors and mindsets across the entire organization.

The rapid pace of change demands that teams and individuals embrace accelerated learning, unlearning and relearning. This adaptability is crucial for navigating evolving technologies, methodologies, and a leadership culture that supports this journey.

Enter the **dojo**, a term borrowed from Japanese culture, meaning "the place of the way", a place where a student comes to practice. Essentially, the dojo - in the context of digital transformation - is a dedicated space where teams can learn and practice new skills and transitioned adding organizations in enhancing and expediting their software delivery. Teams and leaders emerge from the dojo transformed, equipped with the necessary knowledge, software delivery techniques to their own problems. Successful organizations recognize the dojo as the cornerstone of their digital transformation, fostering a meritocratic knowledge and the drive for continuous improvement take root. Optimal learning and growth occur when individuals apply newly acquired skills to their product backlog, transcending existing organizational constraints.

The dojo offers a hands-on, immersive experience that refines a team's thinking and working methods, empowering organizations to expedite product delivery to customers. The dojo method of learning offers a long-term solution and has a lifelong impact on participants, which reshapes their thinking and mindset in professional and personal pursuits.

Co-Created Coaching Backlog

The dojo coaches bring a unique perspective, working closely with company leaders and participants to co-create a backlog tailored to their needs and objectives. In the discovery phase, we base our recommendations on industry best practices and our extensive experience, aiming to identify opportunities for improvement, skill enhancement, and other potential areas of advancement within the organization. For instance, we might suggest a team transitioning to microservices leadership to begin a control cross within the team's backlog. They persist in a manual process that was a significant time sink each quarter. With the dojo's guidance, the team they coached not only automated the process, streamlining their workflow and minimizing errors, but also established a sustainable practice. This end-to-end approach ensures a team that not only adopts new technologies but also develops a proof of concept that not only met immediate needs but also scaled effectively, demonstrating the dojo's commitment to fostering a culture of collective problem-solving and continuous improvement.

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Putting Training To Work in Real Time

Traditional training methods can cycle large numbers of workers through training sessions, but the training is often abstract, and employees quickly find themselves back at their desks wondering how to apply the lessons.

In the dojo model, participants practice by doing and learning others. The dojo provides a safe environment for teams to experiment and innovate, which goes especially upon traditional training programs. Participants engage directly with actual work from their backlog, applying new ways of working and learning from their mistakes in a supportive environment that business and technical environments. This hands-on experience is pivotal in building practical skills and catalyzing organizational change efforts.

> In the Dojo, we bridge the gap between theory and practice, guiding teams to bring their learning to life within their unique work environments. It's about making learning stick and resonate in a very real and impactful way.
>
> **PRAKANYA CHOUDHARY**
> TEKsystems

> Our vision is to redefine how companies adopt and implement cutting edge technologies and ways of working. It's about investing in people and preparing them for the next wave of business and technology challenges. We're committed to making impactful changes by working closely with our clients, getting our hands dirty, and collaboratively solving the actual business problems they face. It's a partnership for the future, walking side by side in this transformative journey.
>
> **DANNY LOPEZ**
> TEKsystems

Key Outcomes Include:

Cultural shift:
Aiming to transform the team's and organization's culture, leadership groups to catalyze meaningful organizational change.

Pragmatic Results:
Drawing from our extensive coaching experience across various industries, we offer solutions in crafting processes, cultures, and methodologies tailored to their specific needs and situations.

Experimentation:
Cultivating a mindset of experiment and learning within the team, we encourage the practice of rapid, short-burst experiments using a "fail fast, learn fast" approach, ensuring and fast-track innovation.

Podcast
From Monolith to Microservices | Listen Now
The Agile Mindcast podcast host Jeffrey Snover interviews Prakanya Choudhary and TEKsystems expert Ricardo Marten discussing their transformation journey through microservices modernization.
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Meet Our Contributors

Prakanya Choudhary
Principal Coach & Consultant

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Principal Coach & Consultant

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Principal Coach & Consultant

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Principal Coach & Consultant

Sources

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