



ADVANCING ORGANIZATIONS | GROWING LEADERS



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Four Steps to Create a Learning Culture

In our last newsletter we discussed the importance of a learning culture to organizational success. In it, we quoted major research results from [Bersin](#) which found that



companies who effectively nurture their workforce's desire to learn are at least 30% more likely to be market leaders in their industries.

Today, we're sharing [four key](#)

[steps, recommended by the Bersin research](#), that you can take to help create a learning culture in your team or organization.

1. **Reward continuous learning.** To trigger deliberate changes in the behavior of team members, you should offer effective, specific rewards. As a leader, it may be tempting to focus on maximizing productivity or short-term benefits, but that may leave little time for learning. According to Bersin, "...among the more than 700 organizations studied, the average employee had only 24 minutes a week for formal learning." Make sure your team sees a clear benefit from learning and that you allow them time to pursue it.
2. **Give meaningful and constructive feedback.** Feedback is essential to improving or changing performance. But don't ignore the value of negative feedback. In an age where many organizations focus their developmental strategies on "strengths" and "opportunities," your team may be hard pressed to improve behavior when they are unaware of their limitations.
3. **Lead by example.** The behavior routinely modeled by leaders, especially senior leaders, has a strong influence on the behavior and performance of their teams. If you want to nurture your team's curiosity or unlock learning in your organization, you should practice what you preach. Display some learning and unlocking of your own curiosity—learn a new skill, volunteer to work on something unrelated to your main job, or take on tasks outside your comfort zone even if you are not good at them. If you show that a bit of curiosity and discipline can make you better, that can inspire others. As Bersin states, "And if you want them to question the status quo and be critical and nonconformist, then don't be a sucker for order and rules!"
4. **Hire curious people.** Although frequently underrated, making the proper selection for new members of your team is key to setting the stage for behavioral change. Rather than focusing on what can be fixed about employees, it's far easier to

prevent issues in the first place. Good selection makes training and development much more effective—it's easier to augment potential than to go against someone's nature. Learning and curiosity are no exception: If you hire people who are naturally curious, and maximize the fit between their interests and the role they are in, you will not have to worry so much about their willingness to learn or wonder how to unlock their curiosity.

Reinforcing positive learning behaviors, giving constructive and critical feedback to align employees' efforts with the desired learning goals, showcasing your own curiosity, and hiring people with high learnability are all likely to create a stronger learning culture within your team and your organization. [Contact us](#). We can help you develop leaders who have the skills to build and support your own learning culture.

Give Your Managers and HiPos the Skills They Need to Succeed

Our next [Leadership Lab™](#) begins October 5. Designed specifically for first tier and mid-level managers, it provides an environment where participants can learn what it takes to



create productive, goal-oriented, collaborative work places. This highly interactive, application-based program teaches current best practices in the interpersonal skills needed to successfully lead and engage others. Leaders are encouraged to bring real-life challenges to class and test their approaches with other participants. From the first day on, Leadership Lab will enhance your organization's performance with more resilient and effective leaders.

“Great activities and exercises that were relevant to the material and the workplace. Finally, a training that addresses the nuts and bolts of leadership along with strategies and tactics. Well done!”

– City Employee and Leadership Lab Participant



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