

Why 70:20:10 is more relevant than ever before.

Technology Trends 2015

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1.

The 70:20:10 approach to corporate learning and development

Featuring

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Although there has been some debate regarding its origins, the 70:20:10 learning concept was developed in the 80s at the Center for Creative Leadership by Morgan McCall, Robert Eichinger and Michael Lombardo. Eichinger and Lombardo later popularised the framework in 'The Career Architect Development Planner' (2000).

The 70:20:10 model is based mainly on observations demonstrating that most learning occurs on the job. The numbers forming the ratio of the 70:20:10 framework represent that the lessons employees learn are roughly 70% from experience and practice, 20% from other people, and 10% from courses and reading. Therefore, 70:20:10 encourages organisations to re-focus on workplace and social learning to develop a high performing workforce.

Charles Jennings, a leading thinker and practitioner in learning, development and performance, emphasises that 70:20:10 isn't about a fixed ratio. It is a simple and invaluable framework for changing focus and aligning resources to support workforce development and learning.

Jennings also states that managers play a key role in the implementation of 70:20:10, as they are the people who have the most influence on effective implementation of the '70' and '20,' and on learning and performance improvement in general.

The role of the line manager

The business case for the role of line managers in the development of employees is clear and simple: the performance of teams with managers

who are most capable in development activities surpass those with incapable managers by as much as 27%.

Results from an important research survey carried out across a number of global organisations by the Learning & Development Roundtable shows that teams reporting to effective managers deliver superior work performance.

Effective employee development produces other compelling benefits: employees are more satisfied, more committed to the organisation, more likely to stay with their employers, and more adaptable to change.

The '70' and '20' development activities rely on support and often direction from line managers. By placing greater emphasis on some of the more powerful development activities, managers can increase the performance of their teams without significantly investing more time.

L&D departments incorporating new learning methods

The role of the L&D department is evolving, from that of traditional training providers to that of a strategic partner providing learning and development opportunities focusing on workplace learning that achieves business results.

“Jane Hart, an international speaker on modern approaches to workplace learning, has suggested a trajectory that has shown how L&D has increasingly incorporated elearning, informal learning, and social learning approaches into what had been an industry primarily providing face-to-face training,” says Tracey Benettolo, executive consultant at LRMG Performance Agency. Benettolo has worked in both Africa and Southeast Asia in strategic roles devoted to leveraging the performance of individuals, teams and organisations in order to drive business results. She adds, “Hart has suggested that there will be a rising use of collaborative learning and integrated talent development as we move forward.”

Technology driving change

“Technology has supported the move from 70:20:10 to continuous learning, which incorporates the enablement of fully blended learning

experiences,” says Benettolo. “It has enabled the design, development and deployment of digitised learning activities and resources to create learning experiences that are flexible (delivered from the cloud to multiple devices), just in time (when a user requires it at their moment of need) and personalised (reusable learning assets can be reorganised and distributed for different learning pathways).”

Examples include elearning modules created using a mix of learning assets that engage learners by providing context, motivation and application, mobile learning, gamification, digital badging, online assessments, virtual environments, online networking, and electronic performance support systems.

Benchmarking learning and development solutions

The 70:20:10 framework isn't necessarily used in isolation. For example, Benettolo also recommends using the 'Towards Maturity Benchmark', considered one of the most comprehensive tools for organisations to review the implementation of technology enabled learning strategies in the workplace. The tool assists L&D professionals to assess their current learning strategies, compare their approach with top learning companies, and set priority actions that will help them deliver peak performance.

“In my experience, the 70:20:10 framework – like Don Pontefract's Pervasive Learning model – concur in that only when all three learning components are implemented together will an L&D department see superior results,” says Benettolo. “It's a guiding philosophy that acknowledges that learning takes place through a combination of formal and informal situations and through others.”

For Benettolo, it's about considering an organisation's objectives, resources and L&D maturity, and then customising the approach to determine how the principles of 70:20:10 can be integrated into a learning and performance ecosystem that creates deliberate and targeted solutions that drive and sustain business success.

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70:20:10 half a century on -
what's changed?

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Ian Baxter, VP of Marketing,
Saba Software

70:20:10 half a century on - what's changed?

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During his 20 years in the software industry he has seen much change, none more than in the Learning industry which in his five years at Saba has changed beyond recognition. The impact of workforce demographics, social networking and the internet has fuelled an exciting transition in the way people work. Today more than ever technology in the form of 'intelligent' talent management is providing a vital component to support this new age of learning.

When Eichinger and Lombardo published the findings in the mid-90s, they must have felt both a sense of elation and frustration. Elation from being able to empirically demonstrate something the learning industry implicitly knew, and frustration from knowing that at that time it would be difficult to formalise and implement this framework especially for all employees. Despite the continuing and healthy debate over the percentages, the 70:20:10 model provides an awareness that people learn from three main areas, the smallest of which is formal learning. Ignoring or leaving the other two components to chance will deny any company the opportunity to increase the agility and effectiveness of their workforce and potentially reduce employee engagement.

If Eichinger and Lombardo had published their findings today, I believe their model would look slightly different and that feeling of frustration would be absent. Why do I believe this? The world we live in today is very different from the world in the mid-90s. Therefore I would like to focus on three related differences between then and now which I am convinced can provide companies a real opportunity to harness the power of 70:20:10.

The first of these is the rise and adoption of four new technologies. Today we have become used to what has been termed the 'Internet of Everything' which for most people provides the first resource they turn to find out why, where, who and how. Who would have thought

that not only companies, but individuals would spend time publishing information and knowledge about almost everything? Mobile technology is the second pivotal technology. With the advent of smartphones, we are able to access the internet for information, use smart apps and contact people wherever we can get a signal and at the point of need. Reed's Law states 'the utility of large networks particularly social networks, can scale exponentially with the size of the network.' Therefore the third technology I want to reference is social technology. Companies like LinkedIn and Facebook have allowed us to build immense networks of contacts and to access the 'wisdom of crowds' for information. The final technology is 'machine intelligence'. This helps us overcome the potential issue that with this access to so much information and data, we can become confused and overwhelmed. Companies such as Amazon and Netflix have adopted machine intelligence to help guide us through the vast quantities of data by suggesting options that are based on our declared preference or implicit need.

Some of you have experienced the value of using these technologies in isolation, but when you combine all four into a single unified L&D system, the effect can be transformative. The good news is that all four are available in a single platform.

However having the technology available is pointless unless people know how to use it, which brings me to the second main difference. Today we have become accustomed to using these technologies, especially in our home lives. We have become 'digital natives' and with this comes a very different approach to the way we conduct our life. As a direct consequence we have a similar expectation from our work environment.

Nowadays the term 'millennial' does not refer so much to the year you were born, but to a state of mind and an approach to life. To illustrate this, I refer to a recent event with my son James, who on breaking the screen on his PC did not, as I suggested, take it back to where he had purchased it because the repair would be expensive and take a few weeks to complete. Instead he used the power of his network and the internet to source, pay for (with my credit card) and fit the new screen himself. I was amazed there were eight people who had uploaded a video on YouTube on how to fit a new screen to his particular make and model of laptop.

Within two days the job was done and he was back to gaming. But you can't win all the time. When we go to work our experience is often very different. Work does not have to be the place we go to work to use 'old technology' and methods for eight hours a day. James certainly is not expecting to and at 18 he is the workforce of tomorrow.

Having the technology and knowing how to use it can be very frustrating if companies won't support their use, which brings me to the main third difference. There is an increasing appreciation by senior company management that today's workforce is different. Different in expectation, approach to work and in what motivates them. There is a general acceptance that with a clear set of objectives and given the right tools, an employee will become more creative, innovative and productive. As a direct consequence, they will become more engaged with the company's business which improves motivation and retention. This is a dramatic change from the top-down hierarchical approach and structure. Today, management is open to these new ways.

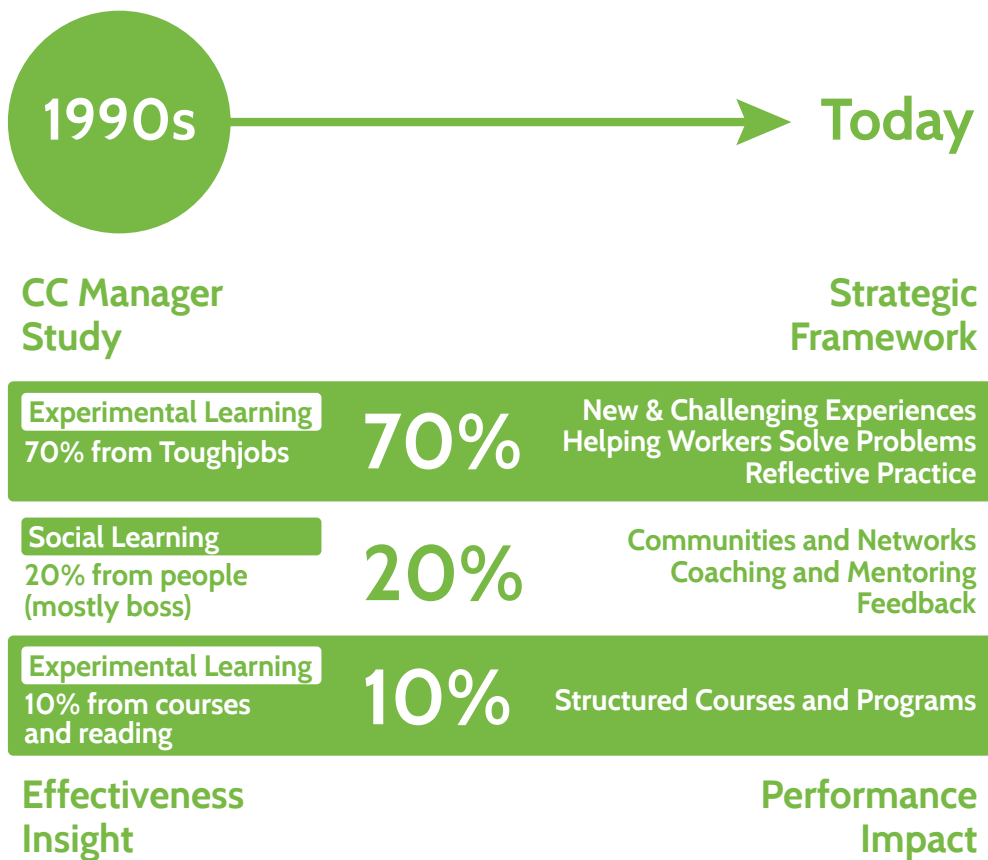


Image courtesy of 70:20:10 Forum

At the start of this article I inferred that Eichinger and Lombardo's 70:20:10 model would be different if they had published their findings today. The graphic above illustrates the main differences between the original research definitions and how I believe the model is defined today. I hope you can see how the adoption and application of the four technologies can support this new definition.

Taking into account the three main differences, I hope you will appreciate why the 70:20:10 model is now achievable and can now be extended to all employees to provide them with a stimulating and engaging workplace. The real challenge facing the L&D function is to recognise this and to make this change happen for their company. You have never had a better chance to make such a significant impact on your company.

About

The logo for TrainingZone, featuring the word "training" in a green, lowercase, sans-serif font and "ZONE" in a black, uppercase, sans-serif font.

TrainingZone

With over 100,000 members, TrainingZone.co.uk is the largest online community for UK learning and development professionals. Profiled members can view and download reports, toolkits, guides and research papers that feature the latest insight and thinking on all the cutting edge issues within L&D and HR. Elsewhere onsite TrainingZone also publishes in-depth features written by industry experts, as well as hosting highly interactive community areas where peers discuss and dissect the issues that really matter.



Saba

Saba delivers a cloud-based intelligent learning and talent management solution used by leading organisations worldwide to hire, develop, engage and inspire their people. With collaboration and machine learning at its core, Saba Cloud offers proactive, personalised recommendations on candidates, connections and content to help employees lead and succeed whether office based or on the road. Saba Cloud is purpose-built on a highly scalable platform that exceeds industry security and reliability standards which can be accessed wherever there's access to the internet. Saba has more than 31 million users and 2,200 customers across 195 countries and 37 languages.

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