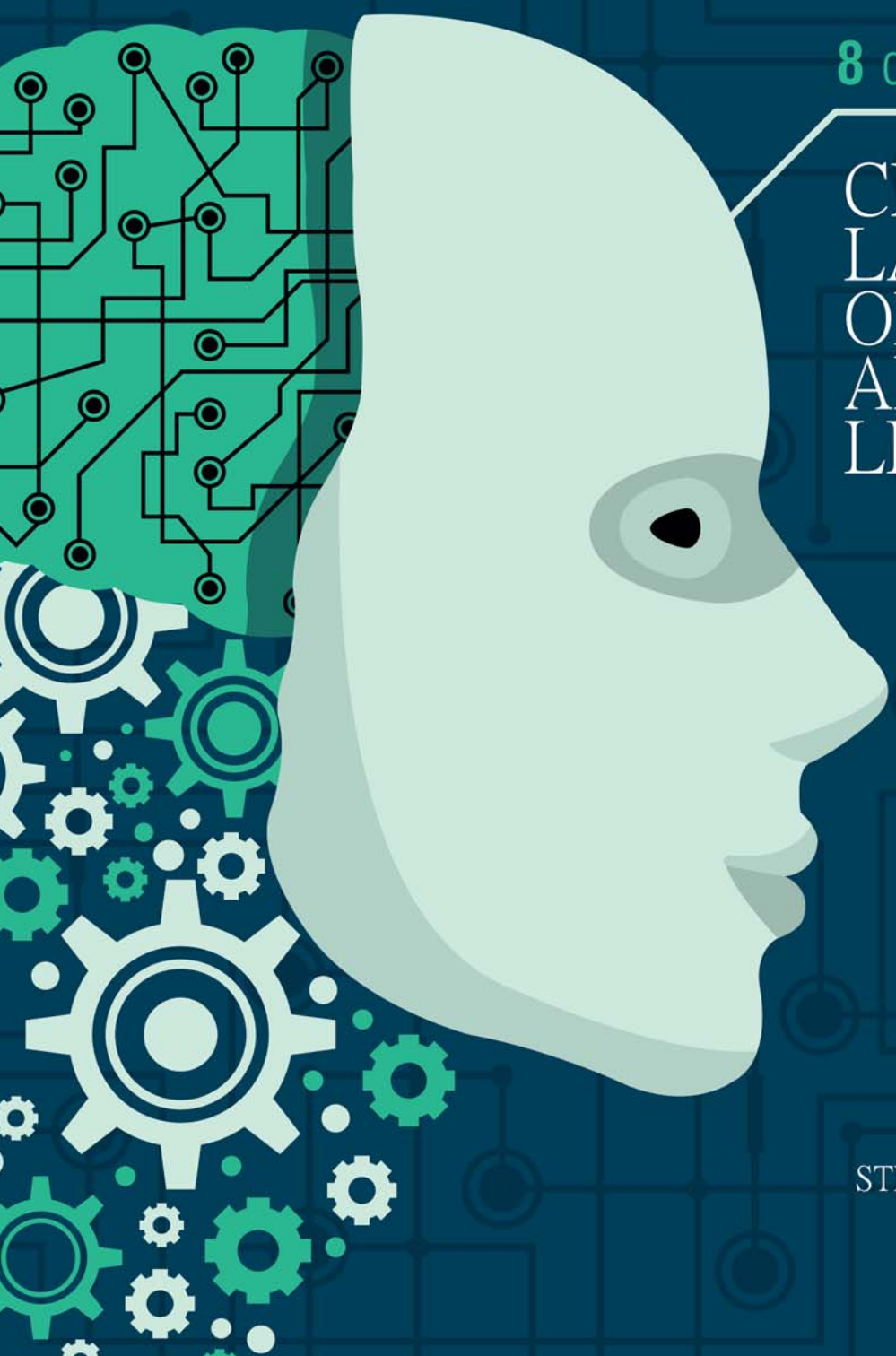


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8 COVER STORY

CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF LEARNING AND THE LEARNER

28 EXECUTIVE LEARNING

MANAGERIAL
CAPABILITIES
FOR THE FIRST-TIME
MANAGER

40 CORPORATE CONNECT

L&D BEST PRACTICES
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



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CONTENTS

JULY 2018

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COVER STORY

8 Changing Landscape of Learning and The Learner - What Might Work Tomorrow?

LEAD STORY

11 The "Here & Now" of Learning & Development

INTERVIEW

14 Christo Popov, Founder & CEO, Fast Track Europe Ltd.

HR-EDGE

18 Making an Impact - How L&D leaders can demonstrate value

20 The Importance of Learning and Development - An Irony!

PARADIGM SHIFT

22 New Age L&D is a proactive change enabler

25 Do You Want to Remain Professionally Relevant in the Digital World?

EXECUTIVE LEARNING

28 Managerial Capabilities for the First-Time Manager



MAKING AN IMPACT

HOW L&D LEADERS CAN DEMONSTRATE VALUE



Pranesh Ramakrishna
Director - Human Resources
Wartsila India Pvt. Ltd.



Today's learning professionals are hungry to add value back into the business. Based on recent studies, the focus is shifting from measuring Return on Investment/Expectation in terms of training efficiency, towards a new strategy for defining learning success as per the level of achievement of business goals defined along with the senior managers.

The more traditional 'measures' of training success, as

mentioned above, do not help build credibility anymore when there is an increasing pressure to add real impact. Nor do they help to strengthen the business case for greater investment in new learning and development approaches, technology tools and platforms.

Technical measurement models such as Return on Investments or Return on Expectation have been extensively debated and are often considered as part of an evaluation phase, ignoring the fact that conversations about learning impact need to start long before a learning programme is completed.

Delivering more for less has been a mantra for L&D professionals. Historically, this meant more training on a lower budget. Today,

however, L&D leaders are clearly focused on the positive business impact that they can make as much as the efficiency to be gained. Indeed, consciousness of the need to link learning to business goals has increased year on year:

It goes without saying that it's very important that any learning is aligned with business, as a lack of alignment is one of the reasons why L&D initiatives do not achieve the required impact. This is about clear business led prioritisation that is aligned with future strategy and, more importantly, focuses on performance approach analysis - replacing the traditional skills assessment. This will ensure that the business owns the solution whilst ensuring that any intervention constantly has the "end in mind"

Learning is about making a real impact on the business, by being clear about the objectives and ensuring that these align with the business strategy. As L&D professionals, we want to add value to our business, and we want to innovate by using new technologies and ways of learning.

and can clearly demonstrate the business value that is being created.

At Wärtsilä, our customer (Business) comes first. For all development needs, we understand the requirements of our customer and design learning activities which best suit the business and can create a long-term impact. The business needs and line managers' expectations are discussed at length, and they are also involved in content design.

Organisations are moving towards adopting new ways of learning. The 70:20:10 principle of learning is still valid, though. Learn through practice and experience on the job (70 percent), learn from others (20 percent), and learn through structures, courses and programs (10 percent), is one of the primary philosophies of learning which is also practiced across Wartsila.

At Wartsila, line managers play a crucial role in daily learning and contribute, to a large extent, to the 70 percent learning domain (practice or on the job learning). We firmly believe that a line manager can contribute to a learning culture for his/her team by being involved and taking an interest in the learning activities of the team members. They can do this by:

- Providing development opportunities and encouraging team members to take them;

- Encouraging team members to be curious and “think outside the box”;
- Creating an atmosphere where sharing information & experiences is valued;
- Giving and asking for feedback; and
- Making sure that new and relevant insights are implemented in the daily work.

We as L&D leaders in today's world want to deliver impact on the business by:

- Creating a productive learning environment by offering learning opportunities that are relevant for the individual and impactful for the business, and where individuals take ownership of and share their learnings;
- Providing a faster response to changing business conditions;
- Improving talent development strategies to provide growth opportunities to people and develop strategic and critical competences; and
- Improve employee engagement with learning that contributes to the company's success.

The ability to demonstrate value starts at the beginning of the learning process, in collaboration with the business. Transformation in L&D professionals is needed, since there is a need for them to see the bigger picture. Towards this end, L&D professionals must:

- Start with the end result in mind;
- Work with stakeholders to articulate what success will look like;
- Work with stakeholders throughout the process;
- Be realistic;
- Monitor and review learning activities on a regular basis; and
- Communicate success.

Wartsila practices the above to make learning relevant and impactful. For most programs, there is a personal development plan made along with the line manager, to be reviewed at regular intervals.

Learning is about making a real impact on the business, by being clear about the objectives and ensuring that these align with the business strategy. As L&D professionals, we want to add value to our business, and we want to innovate by using new technologies and ways of learning. The dynamic market environment and continuous changes therein require us to be pro-active and provide learning solutions in a timely manner that are suited for the relevant purpose.

To make learning impactful, it takes more than L&D expertise. Top management endorsement, collaborative approach with business in content design and ownership, and line manager's support in embedding learning back into the workplace are essential.