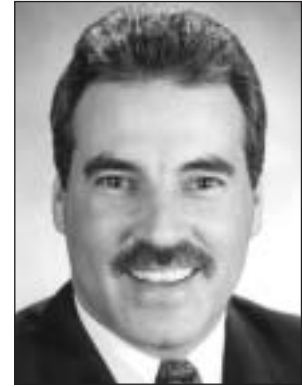


Ken Keis



## The Learning Revolution

Is your business committed to life-long learning? Do you personally have a desire to learn new skills? If a business and individual have no desire to learn anything new, does that mean they already know all they need to know—forever?

It's *no longer enough* to have staff just “do their jobs.” Continuous learning and improvement are essential! Why? It's your only competitive advantage. You can have an attractive office, great service, quality workmanship, and an expensive Website, but it always comes down to people—*your* people.

Typically, top performers are committed to learning. They are always looking for a new edge, thought, idea, and strategy to propel them forward. And companies that are committed to having the sharpest and best-educated team are usually the most successful.

### Learning Myths

#### Myth #1 Training doesn't pay.

In poorly run businesses, this is usually true, but not in well-run organizations. You can have outstanding customer-service policies and customer-recovery strategies on paper, but who must implement them? Your team. A poor team has poor business practices—and usually poor results. The poorly run business can have high turnover (we wonder why), and therefore never get

any return on its training investment. By the time the staff person is trained, he or she is out the door to another firm.

#### Myth #2 Staff don't like training.

Who lets this happen? The learning culture in any organization is a reflection of leadership. When the leadership expects all individuals to participate in continuous learning, they will. If you state the expectation of ongoing learning—up-front, during the hiring process—individuals who don't like learning won't apply.

---

*It's no longer enough to have staff just “do their jobs.” Continuous learning and improvement are essential! Why? It's your only competitive advantage.*

---

Leaders who see learning as a nonproductive event create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Do you have a team of long-term staff members not interested in learning new technology and people skills? Only you as the owner can determine whether their lack of ability/skill/attitude is competitively acceptable.

#### Myth #3 Don't have time for learning/training.

We all set priorities each day. Learning opportunities can be part of the To Do list. It's simply a “value” relationship. For whatever reason, people believe that what they are doing at the moment has a greater short- and long-term value than the improvements this new learning can provide. If we told a person we would guarantee him a million-dollar bonus for attending a special educational session for a week, do you think he could find the time?

#### Myth #4 We can do it on our own.

“We don't need any formal learning or training.” If you believe that is true, answer these questions.

- Does your business performance over the past three years prove that assumption?
- Why do the best athletes in the world have coaches?
- Why do political leaders have outside advisors?
- Why have we, as consultants, hired several professionals to assist us in our business?

Getting a business or a person from A to B—in the fastest and best way possible—usually involves input from others. If it's not a *dangerous* practice, being an island in business is certainly *foolish*.

## **Future Learning Trends**

### **1. Learning as a way of life**

Learning is no longer just about getting a degree, diploma, or certificate. That's only a beginning. Embracing life-long learning must be the norm—not the exception. A “don't bother the staff with training” attitude will be a significant disadvantage in your marketplace.

### **2. E-Learning**

Universities now offer online degrees. E-Learning offers us educational options we have never had before: faster delivery that maintains high quality and consistency; self-study; and more personalized curricula than previous learning models. Video Streaming, Online Assessments, Real Player Audio, Video Conferencing, Self-Study Processes, Interactive Online Chat Lines, and Personalized Learning Processes to Match Learning Style are just a few of the new e-Learning options. E-Learning will not replace all other learning models; it will enhance the overall experience and value.

### **3. Future watch**

Dave Chalk, host of the TV/Internet Computer Show, shares some recent research: in 10 years, all of mankind's knowledge up to 2001 will equal only 1 percent of our total knowledge!

“We never trained in the past, so we don't need to start now,” is a head-in-the-sand attitude. Don't look back to what you have done in the past. Look ahead to what you need to do for the future.

### **4. Personal coaches and mentors**

In another 2001 study, conducted by [www.learningcircuits.com](http://www.learningcircuits.com), [business executive] respondents identified that the key component of their professional and personal development was an executive coach or a personal mentor. Over 44 percent felt this was the most important factor in their improvement. They said it is invaluable to have a person give honest feedback, hold them accountable, and provide non-emotional opinions. There is no substitute for having a quality executive coach or mentor. It's a must!

### **5. Your “Employable value”**

If a person has not developed new skills over the past year, what does that tell you about the individual's values, drive, and willingness to contribute? To stay employable in—and valuable to—a changing economy, you must be better today than yesterday.

Step right up! Life-long learning is for winners! ▲

**Ken Keis**, MBA, is a Senior Partner with Results Consulting Group Inc., an international organization that helps individuals and businesses improve their performance through information processes and products.

Voice: 1-866-852-4347

Fax: 604 859-4347

[results@shaw.ca](mailto:results@shaw.ca)

[www.crgleader.com](http://www.crgleader.com)