

Employee Development and Employer Expectation

Throughout this investigation of learning as a way of life we have journeyed alongside the learner as they have graduated from formal education to become much more self-sufficient in the manner in which they approach new experiences and access to new knowledge.

At no time is self-direction and self-sufficiency more important than in the workplace. However, some employers are more mindful of the place of learning in their strategic endeavor than others. The more informed employers are increasingly taking the need to invest in learning and development as part of a greater sophistication of human resource management more seriously, whilst others have an expectation of their staff's improved performance in which they have not been prepared to play a part. Despite making the investment, many such employers, from the most successful international corporates to our local schools, still fail to cite learning as a critical success factor when it comes to the preparation of their strategic plans.

Workplace research tells us that, as they see it, inadequate levels of top/down communication cause workforces the greatest frustration with lack of professional development opportunities not far behind. Both are fundamental not only to future competitiveness but also to personal satisfaction, motivation, confidence and well-being.

Learning at Work

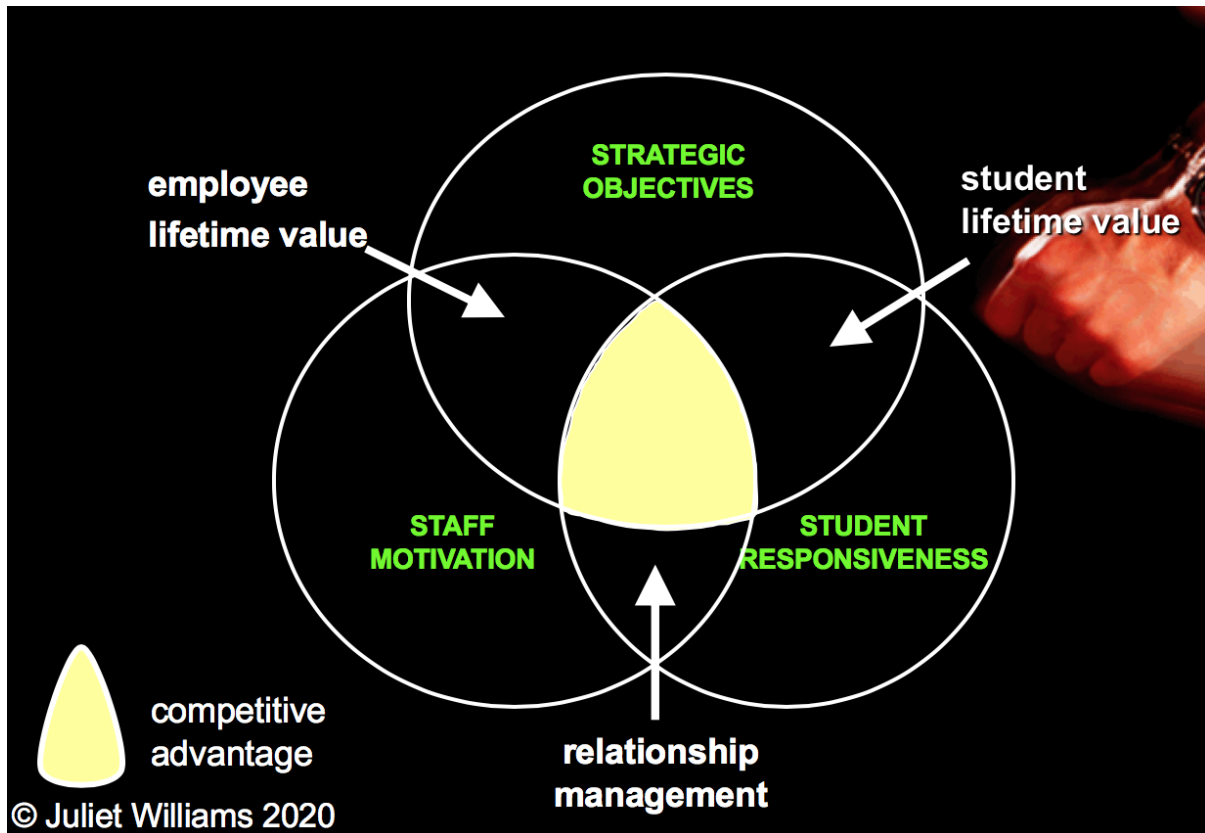
Changing the habits of a professional lifetime is neither simple nor easy. It so often means un-learning and re-learning: unpicking, readjusting, trying out new things to see what might work best but then ensuring that it meets with the approval of those who sit in judgement. Employees have to call upon their own learning power to bring about changes in themselves and the ways in which they relate not only to their managers and colleagues but to those who have put their trust in them. In the case of schools ... the ultimate beneficiaries are the children, their students.

Change in a working environment is not just about what we think or believe but in our spontaneity, the way we naturally talk, act and plan day by day and hour by hour.

To achieve this, staff development is not just about the developmental curriculum on offer but an understanding of how, when and why adults learn: their 'teachable' moments.

Centres of Excellence

This simple Venn diagram captures the strategic importance of monitoring staff motivation alongside student responsiveness. It also introduces the concepts of student lifetime value and employee lifetime value and demonstrates that if an organization fails to invest in both equally, objectives and competitive advantage are unattainable.



If we unpack this a little further, we see that the development of strategic objectives and direction must necessarily be driven by student responsiveness to classroom culture and ways of working, but also constantly under review and evolving to take account of changes in political, economic, social and technical landscapes.

Student responsiveness is itself the platform upon which learning, learning to learn and learning power is built and together with the qualities of relationship management displayed by their teachers their lifetime value is created. So, what is student lifetime value? the contribution that their learning power enables them to make as citizens, socially and economically. Perhaps it is more than that, the students' contribution to their organization's competitive performance.

Classroom culture, ways of working and relationship management are the direct products of staff motivation, the motivation to pursue the strategic objectives and direction. Lifetime value in this case has also two manifestations, the sustaining of each member of staff's contribution to an evolving organization and their individual performance as members of their profession.