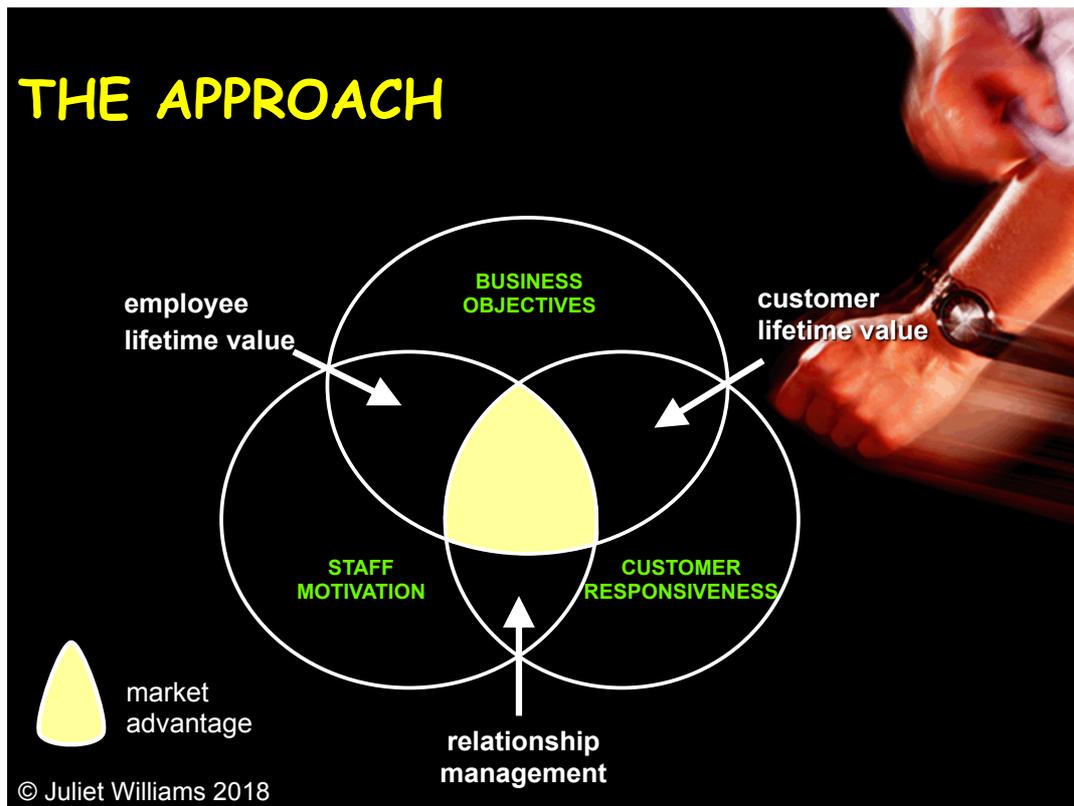


Learning-Powered Organizations: Competitiveness and Market Advantage



There are 3 centers of organizational excellence recognized universally. When working in harmony they are found to create the conditions that provide competitiveness and market advantage. It is the **strategic vision** and the underlying plans for improved performance that will deliver, encourage and unleash both **customer responsiveness** and **staff motivation**. Together, they will manage the relationships that optimize both customer and employee lifetime values.

So, what does this mean in experiential terms?

The strategic plan to deliver the vision is, in many instances, whether in school or in business, commonly preoccupied with tactic, the urgent issues of today rather than the changing circumstances that will influence the performance of tomorrow. Strategic preparation for change in market conditions may mean the taking of unpalatable, sometimes radical, decisions but for which there will always be a natural reluctance. The problem is, however, that every organization will need to ready themselves for changes in political, economic, social and technological requirement.

In short, the early years of an organization's life-cycle will almost inevitably celebrate creativity and innovation but as the years progress and entrepreneurship gives way to the less adventurous, risk-averse nature of professional governance, strategic endeavor tends to give way to tactic.

Successful delivery of the strategic vision relies on market research and adaptation alongside employee development, skilling and engagement. However, neither market nor workforce can be regarded as constants and will always put pressure on the planners to revise their response to market conditions ... whether in meeting customer changing demand or accessing the necessary skills.

Why are Lifetime Values significant?

Acquiring new customers is always much less cost-efficient than cultivating current buyers so that it stands to reason to capitalize on the changing requirements of those with whom they are already familiar and who themselves are familiar with an organization's way of working.

The employee also has a potential lifetime value but that will only be released if there is investment in the skills and knowledge necessary to underpin the strategic plan and perpetuate customer satisfaction.

Learning Power's Role

If 'Goodwill' is the measure of customer satisfaction and responsiveness, then *Learning Power* is surely the measure of not only organizational strategic resilience and awareness but of the professional competence of the workforce and an organization's strategic commitment to investment in the knowledge and critical skills requirement that will deliver its future.

Society is constantly changing so that in order to thrive, an organization and its leaders must adapt and change to keep pace with society's demands. As we have already found, adaptation to change is about being prepared to learn and using that learning in conjunction with what is already known to make sense not only of today but of tomorrow's market environment. Such a determination to flourish in a changing world means that educational institution and businesses alike have no choice but to become learning organizations.

The *Learning-Powered* organization is characterized by its ability to:

- understand the environment in which it operates;
- anticipate the future;
- appreciate its current capabilities;
- learn from practice, experience and accumulated data;
- use their learning to plan and guide change.

Learning organizations can truly claim that everyone within them is a learner.

They are organized as learning systems: they are rich in data and actively evaluate their performance to inform and guide change. There is a focus on student learning, but staff collaborate and learn too. Staff learning is facilitated and harnessed to bring about development in teaching and operational practice, with the Head Teacher, College Principal, Vice-Chancellor or Managing Director as the leading learner.

The learning organization goes well beyond securing extensive professional development. It is concerned to:

- generate and apply individual and team learning;
- learn from, and through, internal systems and processes;
- interact with, and learn from, external sources;
- contribute to, and learn from, other schools and training systems;
- support the development of a lifelong learning culture.

Learning Powered institutions also undertake to develop their students as:

- emotionally intelligent learners;
- cognitively skilled;
- socially adept; and

- aware of themselves as learners such that they are committed to becoming even better learners (meta-learners).

Nonetheless, this is unlikely to happen unless the key influencers themselves adopt these qualities; modelling and using the behaviors they wish to instill into their students. Similarly, teachers will find it difficult to meet this challenge unless, the educational establishment as a whole displays these qualities.

In adopting a focus on learning the entire organization will need to act in ways that:

- ensures its own holistic improvement;
- enables its teachers to grow as confident, interdependent, risk-taking professionals, who in turn..
- guide students to become self-regulated learners.

The 3 centers of organizational excellence and the *Learning-Powered school*

The university or college is no different from any other organization in the development and pursuit of the strategic vision ,with its market and competitive advantage also heavily dependent upon its ability to remain resilient and strategically aware in maintaining staff motivation to innovate whilst monitoring and managing student responsiveness.

