

CTI CHRONICLES



ISSUE No 18 - SEPTEMBER 2013

On Becoming a Learning Organisation

By its very nature, any university is associated with learning. It is traditionally defined as an institution of higher education and research which dispenses learning in the form of degrees at the undergraduate or postgraduate level. But can an academic institution *itself* become a Learning Organisation? What would be the implications and how could it do so?

The Context

The term 'Learning Organisation' is a relatively new term on this island. Historically, it emanated from the work of American Reg Evans in the 1940s but got its modern impetus following Peter Senge's bestseller in 1990, *The Fifth Discipline*, a book that triggered the current phenomenal interest in the concept and its widespread benefits.

A Learning Organisation is generally defined as *"an organisation which learns powerfully and collectively and is continually transforming itself to better manage and use knowledge for corporate success. It empowers people within and outside the organisation to learn as they work, and it utilizes technology to maximize learning and production."* (Marquardt, 1996).



Characteristics

What does one notice when one walks into a Learning Organisation?

- There's a culture that encourages, rewards and accelerates learning
- Change is embraced – and failure is seen as an opportunity to learn
- Everyone is driven by a desire for both quality and continuous improvement
- All employees recognize the importance of on-going and organisation-wide learning
- Learning is perceived as continuous and critical for success
- Information is made accessible to all involved in the learning process
- Everyone engages in constant reflection and conceptualization. Learning is accomplished by the system as a whole – almost as if the organisation were a single brain
- The organisation continuously adapts to the changing environment and uses change to revitalize and reinvigorate itself.

Why important?

The current worldwide popularity of Learning Organisations is due to the fact that many companies have realized that a tidal wave of economic, social and technological change is sweeping the world. And to survive in this intensely competitive world, there is no option but to become a Learning Organisation.

These changes can be observed at four levels:

1. Economic, social and scientific environment

Globalization, economic and market- ing competition; environmental and ecological pressures; the new sciences of Quantum Physics and Chaos Theory; the Knowledge era and current societal turbulence – all these are forces which exercise a profound impact on the way our environment at large is changing.

2. Workplace environment

Information technology; ever-shifting size, shape and arrangements of companies; influences like Total Quality Management; workforce diversity and mobility and the boom in temporary workforce - these are all changing the way business has been traditionally conducted in the workplace.

3. Customers' expectations

Customers have different expectations than in the past and demand today low cost, high quality, speedy and pleasant service, new and customized products.

4. Employees' expectations

Demands for new job skills, job roles and high expectations such as challenging roles, self-development, freedom to explore and take risks, acting autonomously and creatively are all pressures changing employee expectations.

In Mauritius

It is common knowledge that CTI (then known as DCDM Business School) was responsible for bringing the Learning Organisation concept and its implications to the shores of this island. This took place in 1999 when we invited Professor Michael Marquardt, world-leading expert on Learning Organisations and one of its associated tools, Action Learning, to come and address us.

Benefits

Over the years, it is clear that CTI has benefited enormously from this approach. Although limited space prevents a detailed exposé, we are proud of the fact that CTI is today an organisation which can

- ☑ **Anticipate and adapt more readily to the legal, technological and conceptual changes in its environment**
For example, we saw the forthcoming change in legislation favouring the emergence of private universities and were the first to capitalize on it, becoming thus the first private Mauritian academic institution to be given the right to award its own certificates and diplomas
- ☑ **Learn from, match and improve on its competitors' products**
Through constant interaction with its major Australian academic partners and a rigorous process of self-reflection, CTI has been and continues to be in a position to offer an outstanding academic service to its clients – a factor repeatedly recognized by outside sources, for example, the 2012 PMR Golden Arrow award
- ☑ **Transfer knowledge from one part of the organisation to another**
By holding systematically so-called 'Reflection' or 'Post-mortem' sessions after each significant event, we are able to generalize the benefits of any such event to other unconnected ones as well as learn from our mistakes so that they do not re-occur

Peter M. Senge is famous for his words: "An organisation's only sustainable competitive advantage is its ability to learn faster than the competition." When uttered for the first time during the early 1990s, these words ushered a new era in management thinking.

Throughout the world people suddenly began to realize the crucial importance of Learning and the vital place it occupies in the profitability of any organisation. At CTI, we did so towards 2000, as the following pages will illustrate. We have sustained over the years, a determined and consistent effort at growing our institution into a learning organisation.

In this same issue, we highlight the various activities that took place at CTI over the past few months, including our very first theatrical play – *a Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Editorial Team

- ☑ **Make greater use of its employees at all levels of the organisation**
By contributing to the learning process, everyone involved, from the lowest to highest echelon, can impact significantly and positively on the running of the Institute
- ☑ **Can shorten the time required for strategic changes**
Having already spent some time reflecting and learning from other changes, new or additional ones are not so hard to conceptualize and implement
- ☑ **Stimulate continuous improvement throughout the organisation**
Slowly but surely, everyone at the Institute begins to master the quality, innovation, and feedback language, three of the Learning Organisation's most cherished values

Learning Organisation - and Future Employers

It is true to say that as a breeding ground for future employees, CTI enjoys a splendid reputation amongst employers such as its shareholders and other organisations on this island. It is a fact that our graduates are perceived nationally as a cut above the rest – probably due to the no-nonsense, employer-oriented, quality education they receive from our Australian partners.

What are the characteristics most appreciated by future employers? Comments made formally and informally during the past seven years or so reveal the following patterns:

Seeking enduring solutions

CTI graduates understand how to seek enduring solutions to problems. As we drill into them the importance of never giving up, they learn to anticipate and challenge others, even sometimes employers and thus running the risk of being a tad over-confident.

Working in teams

CTI graduates develop an ability to work

in teams and capitalize on the synergy of continuous group learning for optimum performance. Curtin’s famous ‘Capstone’ approach, for example, does wonders at developing critical thinking, working collaboratively, and using a variety of skills to solve complex problems and generate solutions.

Focusing on quality

CTI graduates are highly focused on continuous improvement. Through techniques such as Reflective Journals and Log Diaries, they learn to strive towards a zero-defect mentality as well as think out of the box.



How do Learning Organisations differ from Traditional Organisations?

The following table illustrates the striking differences:

| Traditional Organisations | Learning Organisations |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punish mistakes • Operate traditional working practices • Send employees on training courses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from their mistakes • Adapt their working practices • Encourage their employees to determine their own learning |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play safe • Managers monitor and supervise their staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take risks • Managers coach and develop their staff continuously |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimentation is discouraged • Style of management is command and control • Reviews are instigated after a disaster has occurred | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimentation is encouraged • Style of management is devolution of power • Reviews are carried out routinely and regularly |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff suggestions are discouraged • Decisions are based on management ‘hunches’ or ‘gut feels’ • Work is done within departmental boundaries • Workforce is not encouraged to question | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff suggestions are rewarded • Decisions are based on empirical data but emotions do get explored • Work is done across departmental boundaries • Workforce is encouraged to question |

editorial team

Eric Charoux (*Editor*)
 Soraya Sayed-Hassen,
 Vikash Rowtho, Christel Ramloll,
 Kanya Santokhee
 Rooben Narrainsawmy (*Page layout*)

Learning Organisation – and Our Partners

For close to seven years now, CTI has enjoyed a strong and fruitful partnership with two major Australian academic providers: *Curtin University* and the *TAFE organisation*. The modus operandum is well-known: Curtin provides us with degrees at the undergraduate and post-graduate level, whereas TAFE does so from a Certificate and Diploma angle. What is little known however, is that both partners have brought (and continue to bring) to CTI a most precious return: the ability to become a learning organisation. Here's how:

Review and reflect

On a regular basis, our partners hold consultative discussions and reviews with us during the course of which, in the light of their feedback and standards, we have to reflect and learn about what we are doing right and not so right before taking corrective action. Over the years, this reflection and learning process has proved immensely useful in helping us develop ourselves.

New horizons

A partnership with first-world giants such as Curtin and TAFE opens new horizons and hence new knowledge and methods. We reach the fortunate position where we can adapt our working practices so that they reflect the latest knowledge and trends.

Own pace

The regular exchange between our

partners' experts and ourselves is a powerful form of coaching and mentoring – the very hallmark of a Learning Organisation. In a non-threatening and supportive manner, our staff benefit from the ever-ready advice they receive from our partners, learning in the process to stand on their own feet.

Linking business objectives to learning

CTI's mission is to offer to all its stakeholders a university education that will lead to employability. Originally, we approached both Curtin and TAFE because of their international reputation in offering relevant, career-focussed education. Over the years, we have found that their focus enables us to align our graduate outcomes with the expectations of Mauritian employers.



Learning Organisation – and Our Students

As one of the institution’s main stakeholders, our 1437 students play a key role in helping CTI become a Learning Organisation. How?

Through their feedback

CTI disposes of a wide range of formal and informal feedback tools such as lecturer evaluation, focus groups, eVALUate, CASS, suggestion box, email and so on that are all designed to ensure that it captures the maximum information from its students. The feedback received is analysed formally and systematically, and areas

for improvement are identified. Solutions are then proposed, implemented and monitored accordingly.

Through surveys

Feedback is not limited only to teaching and learning. Students also interact with non-academic departments such as Administrative, Marketing and Finance departments and the percep-

tions of the effectiveness of these department are of course vital to us. On a regular basis, surveys tap areas such as technical expertise, customer service, speed of response, etc.

Through social media interaction

In line with the rapid changes in technology and communication channels, students are increas-

ingly using the social media to express their views about CTI. Precious learning can be derived from the monitoring of such sources on a variety of topics ranging from perceptions to complaints.



Learning Organisation – and Our Staff

CTI's academic and non-academic personnel play a key role in helping CTI become a Learning Organisation. The fact that so many staff report a high level of job satisfaction and remain with us for a significant period, is the living proof that one is never stagnant at CTI but instead one is always learning.

As indicated in the previous pages, CTI not only looks after the learning of its students but is also deeply committed to becoming, as Professor Marquardt once put it, "an organisation which learns powerfully and collectively and is continually transforming itself to better manage..."

What are the practices cherished at CTI which indicate this deep commitment?

Induction

An Induction Programme lasting up to a month is run for all new personnel during the course of which the opportunity to meet others and benefit from their experience is provided. In the process, of course, staff obtain a first-hand appreciation of their new environment and culture.

Staff Training

It is the Institute's formal policy that all staff be encouraged to study further by either enrolling for additional academic qualifications or attending the plethora of training courses run on a monthly basis. Recently for example, CTI staff have had in-house training on Customer Care and this has helped in identifying the areas that most need attention in relation to improving the standard of the service provided by CTI.

Staff Development

CTI must be the only university in the world to shut down completely every Tuesday afternoon for about two hours to provide academic support to its own staff! The time is spent exploring new concepts and technology such as the Flipped Classroom approach, as well

as discussed more perennial concepts such as Customer Obsession.

Coaching and mentoring

On a regular basis, formally or informally, staff are invited to spend time with their superiors or mentors, being coached on how to further improve their performance.

Performance Evaluation

At least once a year, all staff undergo a formal Performance Appraisal process with their Heads of faculty or department. Precious feedback on how to improve further is given and recorded.

Regular Reflection

Typical of the Learning Organisation approach, regular

'Reflection sessions' take place and are designed to evaluate the success of some recent event or strategy, in order to derive lessons for the future.

Career Fair

Another approach designed to help us become a Learning Organisation is that of encouraging all staff to become involved in events outside the scope of their immediate duties. Recently, for example, CTI ran a hugely successful Career Fair, a one-day event during which our students met with industry professionals and obtained a better grasp of the world of work – an event organised entirely by our own staff on a yearly basis.

The huge crowd present during our last Career Fair



Learning Organisation – and Our Clients

With its 16 corporate shareholders representing the major players of the country's private sector, CTI is a unique worldwide phenomenon. As a true Corporate university, it is CTI's major task to satisfy the needs of its clients and become a Learning Organisation in the process. How?

By offering a consultancy service

Not only do we share with our clients the advantages of becoming a Learning Organisation, but we go further by teaching them the ropes. We enable them to master both the theory and practice by running for them a comprehensive consultancy service spread over many months and involving their own company as case study.

By offering Action Learning

Many clients are eager to wit-

ness and gauge the benefits of becoming a Learning Organisation and balk at the prospect of having to wait many months to see any improvements. This is why a by-product of the Learning Organisation, Action Learning, appeals so much to them. As employees form small groups, or so-called 'Learning Sets', and grapple with real-life problems in their companies, they are able to review and reflect on the actions taken and the learnings derived. This can then guide them towards future action and improved performance.

Two-way benefits

In return, CTI also benefits from its contacts with its clients as this allows it too proceed on its journey as a Learning Organisation. How?

By improving our delivery

The feedback forms we receive after each workshop remain a powerful source of learning. We seldom fail to act promptly on them when we feel that they are justified.

By offering a better product

Through this feedback we are also able to develop more innovative and challenging products to cater to our clients' needs. Our partnership with the corporate world provides us with a challenging environment in which we need to test and adapt our current market strategies to improve our customer service, open new markets and launch new products.



Ignite Award Ceremony - CTI Design Students Win Three Prizes

It has received wide coverage in the local press. Billed as the ultimate contest in the world of Graphic Design and Advertising, *Ignite* is the annual Design Portfolio Contest organised by Maurice Publicité's Ogilvy & Mather.

"The Contest marks the career kick-off of future talents," explains Vikash Rowtho, Head of Faculty, "and is aimed at rewarding the best Graphic Design & Advertising portfolios of final-year students from tertiary academic institutions in Mauritius."

CTI students on the Curtin BA Creative Advertising and Graphic Design course won all three awards. **Jean Marie Lo Hun** won the third prize whereas **Bhooshita Purmah** went home with the second prize. And the first prize was awarded to **Imran Jhummun**.

Charles Telfair Institute also won the Challenge trophy for *Ignite's* first edition.



From left to right: Leena Nothoo, Senior Lecturer; Jean Marie Lo Hun, Bhooshita Purmah, Imran Jhummun, and Vikash Rowtho, Head of Faculty

Les Tout-petits au Cirque!

Nos *toddlers* et *preschoolers* ont récemment été au cirque ! « Comme on travaillait sur le thème du Cirque en ce moment en classe, » nous a expliqué Nadine Fanchette, Manager du notre CTI

Child Development Centre, « nous avons décidé d'emmener les enfants au cirque de Samoa à Bagatelle. C'était génial! Les enfants et même nous, les adultes, on a adoré ! Le mini show qui avait été préparé était des plus

approprié avec jongleurs, clowns, trapézistes, et bien sûr la 'roue de la terreur' avec une moto et 'la dame aux hula hoops'. C'était trop impressionnant! Les enfants étaient émerveillés et veulent tous repartir. »



Soft Skills Focus

A programme focused on soft skills. Spread over six modules and lasting six months. Customized for the Harel Mallac Group. And involving 15 of their staff. This was the challenge.

On a regular basis, we are asked by our shareholders or client companies to deliver portions of our Certificate in Management Development or Diploma in Management and Leadership as a stand-alone course certified with a Certificate of Attendance.

As was the case in 2012, we completed this year for the Harel Mallac Group a second edition of their *Going the Extra Mile Challenge* programme, one that focussed on soft skills and which encompassed the following modules:

1. *Discovering and Mastering Yourself*
2. *Presentation Skills/Time Management*
3. *Stress Management & Communication in the Workplace*
4. *Relating to Others Successfully*
5. *Effective Customer Care*
6. *Leading and Building High Performance Teams*

The highlight of the programme was undoubtedly the very last day, a mini 'Outward-bound' session, which took place at Butte à l'Herbe near Grand Gaube. In a magnificent setting overshadowed by an ever-vigilant Coin de Mire, Participants and Observers experimented with various exercises designed to generate leadership and build teams.



Une nouvelle équipe de Blanche, Birger

Blanche, Birger a renouvelé cette année encore sa participation au *Certificate in Management Development*, un programme de Leadership dispensé annuellement par Charles Telfair Institute.

Pour la troisième fois, Blanche, Birger a réitéré sa participation à un programme de formation pour ses managers, le 2013-2014 *Certificate in Management Development*.

Dispensé sur un total de 12 modules, ce programme de leadership couvre des modules de gestion, communication, service clientèle et marketing entre autres. « Nous pensons que ce programme est idéal pour nos managers, » a déclaré Mr Jacques Harel, CEO du groupe, lors du lancement. « Pour affronter les challenges d'aujourd'hui et de demain et s'adapter à un environnement compétitif composé de clients, de donneurs d'ordres, de fournisseurs et d'autres partenaires, il nous faut arriver à comprendre les nouvelles attentes de nos clients, créer de la valeur ajoutée, et surtout innover. »



L'équipe de Blanche, Birger entourant Eric Charoux, Programme Director

CTI volunteers shine at 11th African Junior Championships in Athletics in Bambous

Some 30 CTI students volunteered to help with for the 11th African Junior Championships in Athletics held at the Germain Comarmond Stadium in Bambous from Thursday August 29 to Sunday September 1, 2013.

As the athletics governing body for the African continent, the Confederation of African Athletics asked Mauritius to organize the event just two months before the competition as South Africa stepped back from hosting the Championships.

“It was a challenge for the Organizing Committee,” says CTI Lecturer Veejayen Carpen. “CTI was asked to give a helping hand with some of the core aspects in the organization as this was a high profile event with athletes and delegations from 33 African countries.”

CTI students’ response was immediate and their enthusiasm was evident right from the outset. Seven students volunteered to be part of the Press, Communication and Marketing team, and were mainly from the BA Mass Communication and BCom Tourism Management & Public Relations programmes. The team had to find effective and innovative ways to promote the event to the Mauritian population, and to deliver promptly.

The tasks awaiting the Press, Communication and Marketing team were to:

- ☑ Brainstorm and generate a communication plan for the event
- ☑ Create and manage a Face book page for the event
- ☑ Formulate questions for radio quiz competitions
- ☑ Conduct interviews and write articles for a souvenir magazine
- ☑ Carry out research on different aspects of Mauritius that could be included in the souvenir magazine
- ☑ Work on a media kit to be issued to both local and foreign journalists attending the event
- ☑ Assist and distribute results to journalists during the four days of the competition

Third-year BA Creative Advertising & Graphic Design student Danillo Laprovence was given the task to design a souvenir magazine for the event. A job which he undertook with much enthusiasm and his work received much praise from all quarters.

A team of nine BA Graphic Design students worked on the



design and mounting of the Championships logo in 3D from materials that can be recycled. The students brainstormed and decided to use sugar cane for the main part of the logo. The 3D logo was placed right behind the podium and could be seen in literally all pictures and footage of athletes receiving their medals.

The protocol part of the event involved most of the CTI students as 14 of them from across faculties and schools had volunteered. The main tasks were to greet delegations on their arrival at the airport and assist them for their departure, attend to VIPs at the stadium

and also in the protocol part for the distribution of medals and awards.

CTI Graphic Designer Rooben Narrainsawmy was called upon to design posters, flyers, banners, invitation cards, signage, and other materials for the event. He was also responsible for the stadium branding and for the design of the advertising boards for both local and international sponsors.

Some of our staff helped the students, but overall it proved to be a fantastic experience for CTI students and a wonderful opportunity for the youth to show their determination to be up to the task.



Theatrical Début for CTI students

From the 4 to 6 September, students of CTI joined together with students from the University of Mauritius and a few secondary schools around the island to star in a stage adaptation of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as produced by the amateur drama company, The Troupe. Over 2000 secondary school students attended the performances held at the Mahatma Gandhi Auditorium in Moka.

"The students and I knew that there would be a good response as this text is on the Cambridge syllabus for 2014 but we were astounded at the number of bookings made by schools," confided Soraya Sayed Hassen, who directed the play and is currently Head of Education, Communication and Languages at CTI.

Most of the cast were performing on a stage before an audience for the first time. "The

production has brought a lot of personal satisfaction to us," shares Yashdith Bachwa who played the role of Oberon in the production, "as it has allowed us to grow as individuals and work with different kinds of people whom we may not have had a chance of getting to know otherwise."

The cast and technical crew of the production was entirely made up of students, many of whom had to learn new skills on the job. "I had never worked a spotlight before," confides Gary Poussin, a student in the final year of his BA in Graphic Design at CTI, "but it was a lot of fun and I would be quite happy to work on another project of this kind." A feeling shared by all of the cast and crew who not only performed as actors but also lent a hand in concocting costumes and building the set.

"It was always a dream of mine that CTI students would perform in a theatrical production and I hope that this is the first of many!" declared Odylle Charoux, Director of Academic Affairs at CTI.



Pyramus, Thisbe and "The Wall"



Long queues of students from various schools formed early

"The course of true love never did run smooth!" William Shakespeare



World Universities Ranking - 2013

Our main academic partner, Curtin University, has once again been ranked in the 401-500 band of world universities according to the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). The ARWU is recognised as the most relevant research-oriented university ranking system in the world. Compared with 10,000 universities worldwide, this places Curtin in the top 5%. While the ARWU is research-oriented, it is also dependent on a range of other staff and student statistical data.

"This finding is very encouraging," commented our Executive Director, Professor Charoux. "It shows once again that we made the right choice by selecting Curtin as our main academic partner."



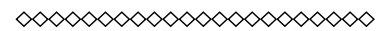
Letter's Corner

The Editor
CTI Chronicles
Telfair, Moka

Dear Sir

We heard that there are many activities being organised at Charles Telfair Institute. Where can we have a look at the programme?

V La Roche



You may contact Mr Bennon Soobiah, our Events Manager or visit our Facebook page for information on forthcoming events.



CharlesTelfairInstitute

Vice Chancellor's List

Yashtee Deeksha Susty and **Christophe Ng Fook On Ng Yow Thow** have been awarded Vice Chancellor's List from Curtin University - Yashtee for the second time!

Created in 1991, the VC List recognises the highest academic achievement amongst Curtin's undergraduate student body. This means that both now have VIP access to a number of Curtin's facilities.



Yashtee Deeksha Susty



Christophe Ng Fook On Ng Yow Thow

eVALUate Winner



BCom Management and Marketing student, **Dharmeshwarlall Gobin** is the winner of the Curtin University, eVALUate 2013, Semester 1.

Dharmeshwarlall Gobin



Wedding



Yesha and Rajiv Pullut Admin Officer **Yesha Sookdeb** married **Rajiv Pullut** on 25th August.

New Babies



Riyash, son of Natasha Sujeebun Zargar, Registrar Admin, was born on 23rd May.



Aidaa, daughter of Nidaa and Shafiq Gopee, both lecturers at CTI, was born on 9th September.

New Appointments



Artee Reetoo-Seebaruth
Lecturer
Education



Greta Curpen
Lecturer
Education



Thierry Legrigore
Lecturer
Design