

My learning organization

[Business](#), [Organization](#)



I work as a full time comptroller for a copier reseller. Our company lease copiers to different clients for a monthly fee. When these copiers are turned over after the lease contract, the company either has it released or refurbishes the machines and sells these machines at refurbished price. The organization in our company is not large. We are just a group of ten workers but have been servicing big clients for the past ten years.

I would say that our company is an example of a learning organization. Personally, as part of this team, I continue to test my experiences by at the least keenly aware of my day to day routines. Being a comptroller is a tedious job and I am expected to look into the unexpected. I cannot do this if I make my job into a habitual routine where small items can escape my attention.

Existing systems and existing work flow can make someone lax meaning, one would just merely trust the system to check itself, which doesn't really happen especially when the process fails. To test my routines, I would sometimes randomly check receipts that have been processed, just to make sure if they have been processed rightly. Sometimes I would have fun using the system in the office to evaluating my own home budget or inventory. This way, I would know if I have learned the experience by its very nature because the more I can adapt the learning to other kinds of venues, the more I know that I have learned the process indeed.

In terms of producing information, my work lets me be responsible in counter checking sales and inventory. The information I deliver is crucial because should there be anomalies in sales or inventory, my information would be

helpful in proving discrepancies. I may have second hand data but the corroboration of the information from my work will help support primary data that the office needs, not only to balance finances but most especially to forecast business.

It is important for our company's employees to share knowledge. Information from our specific work is shared systematically through the regular weekly meetings. Though the company is small, these meetings are helpful in leveling off expectations, affirming transactions, threshing out possible conflicts between employees or systems that do create conflict from time to time. Mistakes happen and it is in these weekly meetings that the lessons of a few are shared with everyone thereby sharing the learning.

Sharing of knowledge also takes place when we exchange insights about our work like our clients, a good sale, a problematic machine. These insights are shared during breaks or in a few shared exchanges that can happen in a few seconds. These insights are important to note because these insights are seeds of knowledge that each person plants into the learning organization.

I couldn't think of any other innovative step that company has taken up that's big enough to commemorate. But in the last few years that I have worked with my company, I believe that innovations that have been done came as small steps that are almost not felt but the impact towards helping the company grow is definitive. An example would be making sure there is a person in charge during lunch breaks. It was a matter of adjusting some people's lunch hour so that we can still answer client inquiries that came in during lunch breaks.

True enough, there were successful client inquiries that were received during this unholy hour. Another example is allowing lactating office mates to express their milk or even bring their newborn to the office. Though the newborn took a few office hours from the employees since it can't be helped to muse over the infants from time to time, the infants also provided a stress relief from time to time. Innovations need not be spectacular or ground breaking. Sometimes, the mere effort of our manager to take time out to look at your family's picture on the screen savers is innovative enough.

As a comptroller of the company, changes that can help facilitate the company's transition from its existing performance to become high performing would have to be spearheaded by the sales force. Spearheading doesn't mean to be the sole lone ranger to go out in the field. The company has existing information, experience and knowledge enough to make it accomplish bigger markets. If bigger markets are to be conquered, the ten-man team need to be a high performing unit to maximize company resource.

The usual way for most businesses to become bigger is to put in additional capital or resources to accomplish new and bigger tasks. I believe that the better strategy to adopt is to bank on the learning of the company as a team and make it work to get additional clients. All information and knowledge are summarized and insights are articulated. It is best for the sales team to translate these data into formidable input that could help them increase their sales forecast.

In this knowledge based setting, companies though transforming themselves to become paperless communities still need the services of copiers. Print has

always been time honored and historically, tactile systems of documentation are still considered a part of man's cultural lifestyle. Therefore, there is yet a big market for our company to expand.

The methods of Peter Vaill will help the company achieve its expansion by transforming the company into a highly performing system. The existing weekly meeting of the team can yet evolve into the venue where each team player can fine tune each other's rhythm according to the other team player's pace so that no one lags behind and no one goes too far forward.

Should the company need additional workforce, the decision must be decided by the whole team because it is important to acknowledge weaknesses or failures. Learning organizations continually engage themselves into processing their mistakes so that growth is felt by the whole organization. If this happens, the organization will be able to trust each other as they take in bigger challenges and bigger learnings.

Reference:

Vaill, Peter B. 1998. *Spirited Leading and Learning: Process Wisdom for a New Age*. Jossey-Bass