

# Learning-centered organization

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



In today's learning-centered business environment, focus is gradually shifted from individual performance and competition to a more congenial relationship, towards being cooperative and building excellent performance through team effort and coordination. These seemingly group-oriented characteristics of the new business environment have become the thrust of MIT's Organizational Learning Center, which specializes on the creation and development of organizations to becoming " learning organizations.

This program proposes a radical change using a simple approach: by shifting the members' perspectives from being individualistic to being collectivist. This proposal is simple in that a learning organization should adapt the values of coordination and cooperation-generally, collectivism-in order to induce this radical change in perspective.

In Senge and Kofman's article, " Communities of Commitment," they explicated the roots of the creation of and necessary requirements for a learning organization. In it, they also introduced the analytical model called the Galilean Model, which effectively explains and illustrates the core principles that every learning organization should be and have.

This paper posits that the pursuit for a learning- centered organization, i. e. building 'communities' through organization-based commitments, require a deviation from the norm of today's business organizations, which are primarily individualistic and competitive, to being collectivist and cooperative for the success, mainly, not of the individual, but of the organization or community. One of the important findings from Senge and Kofman's analysis

was the use of the systems perspective in explaining the importance of collectivism, cooperation, and principles of the Galilean model.

As explicated by the authors, the systems perspective allows organizations and its members to "... move from the primacy of pieces to the primacy of the whole, from absolute truths to coherent interpretations, from self to community, from problem solving to creating. " This passage adequately described the differences between an individualist and collectivist character of organizations. In individualistic organizations, central in it is the individual, wherein the high-performing individual is determined through competition among other individuals/members.

It is also centered in conducting decision-making processes through a more general manner, rather than taking into consideration a problem and solution's effects not only in the operations of the organization, but the members themselves. Since the individualist character of organization has prevailed for a long time since the introduction of modernism, this is a tradition that cannot be easily changed and replaced, especially with a contradicting character such as collectivism.

This is a challenge particularly difficult among highly-individualistic societies, wherein individuals have high self-reliance and independence. Thus, the authors invoke a " truth" that must be accepted by each member of the organization, in order to recognize the importance of learning and cooperation: "[t]o learn, we need to acknowledge that there is something we don't know and to perform activities that we're not good at. But in most

corporations, ignorance is a sign of weakness temporary incompetence is a character flaw.

Thus, through learning, members learn to accept the reality that ignorance and temporary incompetence will always be present; it is the role of the learning organization to remedy this problem through the learning-centered management, or by adapting the systems perspective. Systems perspective is reflected in the Galilean model, which subsisted to the following principles and characterized as follows: (1) the primacy of the whole; (2) the community nature of the self; and (3) language as generative practice.

In the first characteristic of the learning organization, giving primacy to the role of all members of the organization, brought out the importance of members working together to achieve a goal or objective. It is through working as a team or group that decision-making processes become more efficient and effective, since the problem is regarded by not only the perception and opinion of an individual, but other individuals as well, who may have a different way of looking at the problem and creating a solution to it.

The second characteristic of the learning organization, according to the Galilean model, is that there should be a cultivation of an " us" rather than " me" attitude. That is, the individual should learn that a task, in order to be accomplished with the highest quality and time efficiency, cannot be accomplished by him/her alone; there must also be one or more individuals making sure that the task is completed with quality and efficiency.

It is through this process of coordination that work is performed efficiently, and individuals learn about their capacities and limitations as members/employees of the organization. Lastly, communication and interaction among members is an imperative endeavor that must be pursued in a learning organization. 'Keeping communication lines open' allows members to determine how tasks are accomplished, and should problems arise, they will be able to identify immediately at what point the problem occurred in the process of completing the task or activity at hand.