

Social learning leadership certificate
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TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE OF A DEPARTMENT

Olga works for a fairly traditional training department that organizes training sessions in response to requests from various business units. Her goal for the year was to introduce a social-learning perspective into the strategic thinking and practice of her department. This new perspective foregrounds engaging people in activities that address issues of practice rather than delivery of a curriculum-based training program. Sometimes it seems at odds with traditional training, even if it is meant to complement rather than replace it. It also requires different approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of a training or learning opportunity. Introducing such a perspective is therefore transformative, which can be a challenge.

PERSISTENCE

Her project has seen its share of ups and downs. An example is the departure of one person with whom she had been working closely on a specific community. Working on the transition was difficult, especially the goal of creating continuity between people and not just processes. But she reached to the person's manager to create this continuity. Olga does not give up. This persistence is a key requirement for social learning leaders whose work often challenges established ways of doing things.

BOUNDARY CROSSING

Olga shows a strong interest in crossing boundaries and in working in the spaces between practices and organizational units. She aspires to build bridges across the organization and create a context in which others can do the same. One of the reasons she is comfortable working across boundaries comes from her life story which has brought her from her native Siberia to Denmark. This has given her the experience of living and making sense of different perspectives and worldviews. This experience of straddling worldviews is something we have observed in successful social learning leaders.

INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY AND BUSINESS SENSE

Olga's approach is rooted in the intellectual curiosity from her time in academe. She is at ease with the conceptual frameworks of social learning theory, which feed this intellectual curiosity. Now she is applying her intellectual discipline to the pursuit of business goals. Her challenge is to translate her understanding into aspirations and actions that make sense in a business context and will give her the power to act.

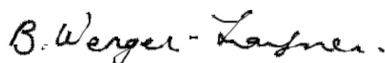
FOCUSING ON LEARNING AS A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

What has driven Olga's approach is her own thinking about what will best serve business imperatives in times of rapid change rather than implementing prescribed tasks typical of her job. That is how she came to view social learning as a strategic imperative. This entrepreneurial drive is an essential component of leadership, and therefore tends to push the envelope of job definition. In a business context such a stance, especially if it calls for a culture change in the organization, requires elaborate demonstration of value from different perspectives. Doing this systematically is a good way to think of the next phase of her work.

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