

ASTD Competency Model: Social Learning Update

SOCIAL LEARNING: HOW LEARNING PROFESSIONALS USE IT

Social learning is exactly what it sounds like: using social media tools to learn with and from others. Some examples of social learning are:

- Trainers engaging with employees using a blog
- Coworkers using internal social networks or wikis to share thoughts, ideas, and best practices

At its most basic level, social learning helps people become more informed, gain a wider perspective, and make better decisions by engaging with others. "Social media uses technology in an effort to extend the reach of social learning. ...What's new is how powerfully they work together." (Tony Bingham, ASTD President and CEO).

QUICK FACTS AROUND SOCIAL LEARNING

- Today's technology allows us to share information, find new resources, and access knowledge regardless of time or location. Social learning tools help learners to facilitate their own natural desires to learn and collaborate.
- Baby Boomers are retiring, with predictions that half of the workforce will be Millennials by 2014. People who are responsible for recruiting, managing, and developing employees should be thinking about how to adapt to this generation and how they work and learn.
- While the initial users of social learning tools were predominantly Millennials, the appeal has widened since then.

RESEARCH SURROUNDING SOCIAL LEARNING

To answer the question of just how social learning affects learning professionals, ASTD commissioned a research study. The study consisted of a review of current research on social learning, engaging with learning technology leaders and Certified Professionals in Learning and Performance (CPLPs) credential holders in focus groups, and surveying ASTD members. The goal of the study was to identify which competencies learning and development professionals need to know now and in the future, as it pertains to social learning.

RESEARCH FINDINGS (JANUARY 2011)

- Social learning is important to organizations. 50 percent of the 1061 respondents surveyed describe social learning as important to their current job performance. 70 percent believe social learning is going to be "important" to "extremely important" to their job performance in the next three years.

- Social learning is distinct from other types of learning. In particular, the flexible nature of social learning means that learners can take better control of their learning by using real-time communication and user-generated content. Combined with increased on-demand learning access, social learning arguably engages learners more deeply than traditional learning methods.

IMPACT ON THE ASTD COMPETENCY MODEL

The ASTD Competency Model has been revised to include social learning content. It is now part of the "Managing Organizational Knowledge" Area of Expertise (AOE). It is not integrated fully into Managing Organizational Knowledge. While related, social learning is still a distinct topic but not a new AOE.

KEY TAKEAWAYS ON SOCIAL LEARNING

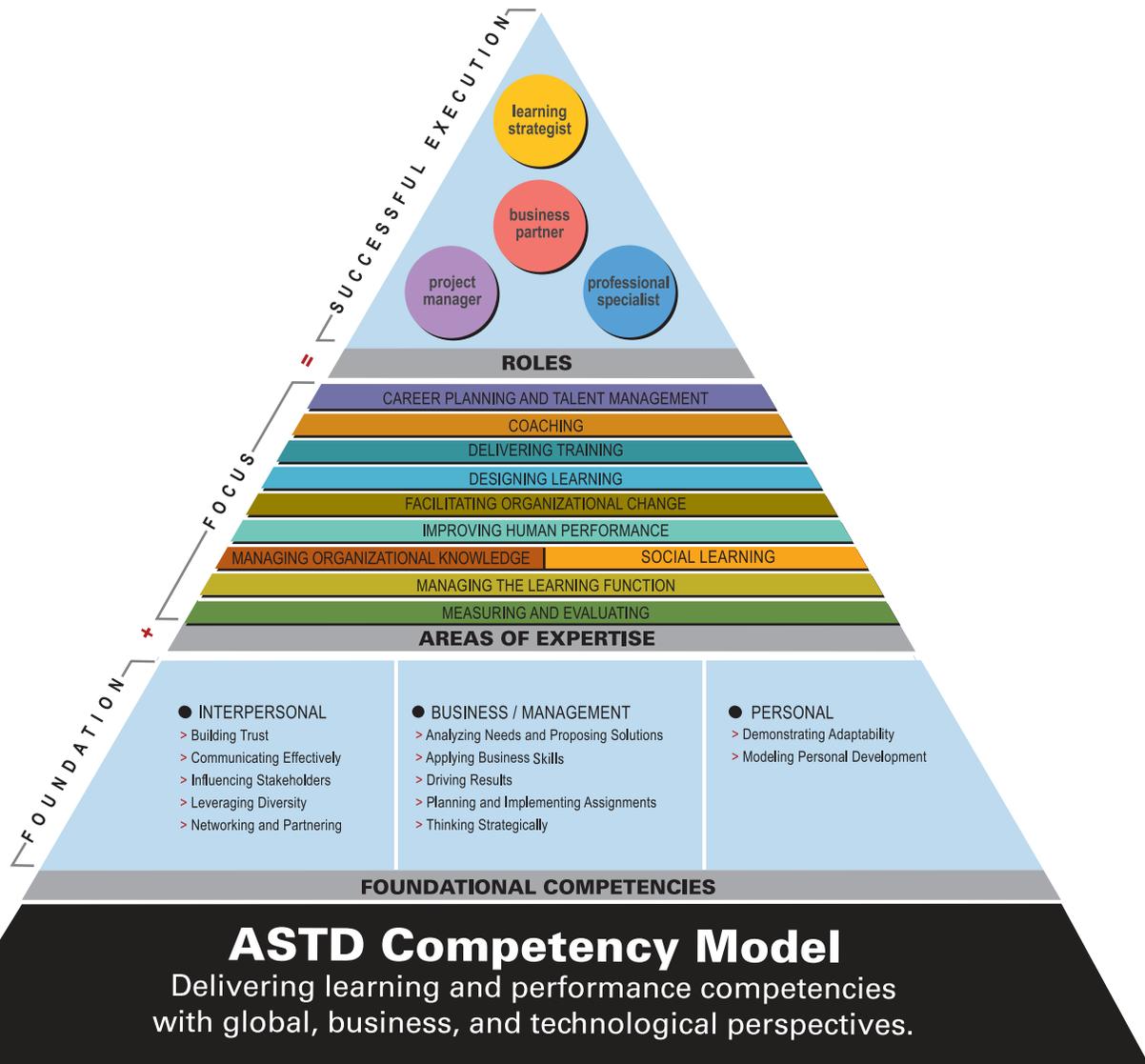
- Understand how social media can be used for learning. Learning professionals need to know how social media facilitates information exchange and communication to enhance employee development.
- Know how to use social learning tools. It isn't necessary to know how to use every specific social media platform (Twitter, Facebook). Instead, focus on how categories of tools like social networks, wikis, and blogs can support your learning strategy.
- Know techniques to overcome objections. Many stakeholders still believe that "social learning" equals "wasting time." As a learning professional, you need to know how to let stakeholders see the positive aspects of social learning while still addressing concerns about productivity, privacy, and security.

Useful Social Learning Resources

1. Allen, M. & Naughton, J. "Social Learning: A Call to Action for Learning Professionals." *T+D* magazine, August 2011, 50-55.
2. Bingham, T. *Social Learning for Learning Professionals*. Infoline, Number 1101. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, January 2011.
3. Bingham, T. & Conner, M. *The New Social Learning: A Guide to Transforming Organizations through Social Media*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010.
4. ASTD Research. *The Rise of Social Media: Enhancing Collaboration and Productivity across Generations*. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, 2010

For more information about the ASTD Competency Model, go to www.astd.org/model. For more information about ASTD Certification Institute's CPLP certification program, go to www.astd.org/cplp.

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ASTD Competency Model
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