


**LEARN OR DIE: USING SCIENCE TO BUILD
A LEADING-EDGE LEARNING
ORGANIZATION (COLUMBIA BUSINESS
SCHOOL PUBLISHING) BY EDWARD HESS**



**LEARN
OR DIE**

Using Science to Build a Leading-Edge
Learning Organization

EDWARD D. HESS

 Columbia Business School
Publishing

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Review

As digital technologies race ahead there is a growing need for creativity and innovation. But how can we build organizations that foster the highest levels of creativity and innovation? *Learn or Die* is a blueprint for creating such organizations. (Erik Brynjolffson, Co-author, *The Second Machine Age*)

In *Learn or Die* Ed Hess knits an impressive fabric of insights from widely disparate strands of thought, experience, research, and real cases. Hess harnesses new evidence to challenge old nostrums. Practical and provocative, this book ranges across vital issues such as learning, innovation, team-building, and leadership. Read this book and prosper; read it before your competitor gets to it. (Robert Bruner, Dean, Darden School of Business)

This book does a beautiful job bringing together the most important ideas in organizational learning, established by academics and practitioners over the past thirty years or more, into one place. (Amy C. Edmondson, Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management, Harvard Business School)

An excellent book. In *Learn or Die*, Edward D. Hess captures a central element to enhancing and sustaining success as a business organization or as one of its leaders?being a high-performance learning organization. This book is a thought-provoking study of the technological advances making this need ever more relevant and provides a comprehensive roadmap of the culture, leadership, employee learning behaviors, HR policies and other organizational processes necessary to build and lead such an organization. (Roger Carlile, Executive Vice President and CFO, FTI Consulting)

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The smart money is on innovation, which depends on personal and group learning. Ed Hess combines a tour d'horizon of what is known about individual learning and about conducive environments for organizational learning with fascinating case studies of companies who use learning to win. Any leader who needs to encourage innovation will find information and reflections that will be both humbling and inspiring. (Michael Balay, head of global strategy, Cargill, Inc.)

Learn or Die in a masterful manner makes it clear that consistent business growth can only be achieved through learning?there is no other way?and that the pace of business change today requires a scientific approach to building a high performance learning organization. For those responsible for leading, Learn or Die should be mandatory reading. (Terry S. Brown, chairman and chief executive officer, Edens Investment Trust)

Learn or Die allows the reader to not only to visualize the future, but also, and more importantly, to create the future by unleashing the power and potential of building a learning organization. It has been demonstrated that strategies, systems and processes can be copied by others, yet a company's people, and the way they learn, are true differentiators. Ed Hess captures the essence of a high performing organization and shares his "secret sauce" through an actionable blueprint for becoming a leading-edge learner and creating a high performing organization. (Jeffrey S. Shuman, senior vice president and chief human resources officer, Quest Diagnostics)

Ed Hess is doing some of the most interesting and important work in management today and his newest book, Learn or Die, is already my personal favorite. This book is characteristic of all of Ed's work?providing wise but straight-forward and pragmatic advice on finding the right people, creating the right environment and installing the right processes to embed learning. In a globalizing world, where adapting to and learning from difference is likely to be the most critical source of competitive advantage, Learn or Die is a must read for any manager interested in solid, research-based advice on how to survive the increasingly unpredictable, chaotic world we live in. (Jeanne Liedtka, coauthor of Solving Problems with Design Thinking)

To achieve and sustain real business success in the 21st century?individual and organizational?you need to understand and leverage the new science of learning. Fortunately, there's "Learn or Die" by Ed Hess, who explains the "why" and "how" better than anybody. This deeply informed, yet practical book provides the new road map for a better "you" and a better company. Read or miss out. (Andy Fleming, CEO, Way to Grow, Inc.)

Learn or Die makes a compelling case for the need to create high-performance, human-oriented learning organizations?and for the remarkable degree to which we are all capable of succeeding as leaders by following a path of ongoing, integrative learning. Combining fascinating behavioral research, actionable advice, and superb analysis of real-world business examples, Ed Hess has crafted essential reading for those seeking to prepare their organizations?and themselves?to thrive in a global marketplace characterized by rapid change, fierce competition, and a desperate need for leadership based on principles that are smart, sustainable, and, above all, humane. (Ming-Jer Chen, former president, Academy of Management)

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Learn or Die examines the process of learning from an individual and an organizational standpoint. From an individual perspective, the book discusses the cognitive, emotional, motivational, attitudinal, and behavioral factors that promote better learning. Organizationally, *Learn or Die* focuses on the kinds of structures, culture, leadership, employee learning behaviors, and human resource policies that are necessary to create an environment that enables critical and innovative thinking, learning conversations, and collaboration. The volume also provides strategies to mitigate the reality that humans can be reflexive, lazy thinkers who seek confirmation of what they believe to be true and affirmation of their self-image. Exemplar learning organizations discussed include the secretive Bridgewater Associates, LP; Intuit, Inc.; United Parcel Service (UPS); W. L. Gore & Associates; and IDEO.

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Features

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LEARNING: A prime human function

By Armando Izquierdo

Besides breathing and eating as vital functions that keep us alive, LEARNING has emerged as an indispensable skill to survive as individuals and organizations. Paradoxically, our body is such a perfect organism that search for minimum energy paths, and learning is an energy intensive process, as a result, the human learning machine prefers to operate in a low gear—on autopilot—as much as possible to conserve energy. We require high levels of mindfulness, deep understanding, and a lot of practice, to learn how to learn and to overcome the intrinsic human barriers that inhibit an efficient learning. Such barriers will surprise many LEARN OR DIE readers due to their psychological origins observed in day to day individuals behavior, such as: the strength of our ego defense systems; our existing views of the world—our mental models—; the lack of critical thinking and collaboration processes; among others that commonly are stimulated by some organizational cultures and leadership styles. This is a must-read topic for those interested in getting a deeper understanding on how to get the most from organizational learning.

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Learn and Prosper!

By Sean P Ryan

I learned long ago from a wise professor that perhaps the only truly sustainable competitive advantage is an above market rate of learning. The question then becomes, "How does one increase the rate of learning in an organization?"

As Professor Hess enjoyably outlines in his excellent book, it begins with an understanding of how the human mind works and how high-performing organizations prioritize and deliver critical feedback.

Most businesses are less than the sum of their parts. Learn or Die is a challenge to that wasteful inequality.

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Thorough research, disciplined execution

By Brian Kight

This book is an in-depth combination of academic research, study, and theory validated in real organizations, with real leaders, real people, and real results. Most leaders will read all of this and implement some of this and execute none of this. Those that do execute the principles in this book will see significant return on energy invested.

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