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Instituting a Learning Organization (LO) Architecture in the Acquisition Workplace





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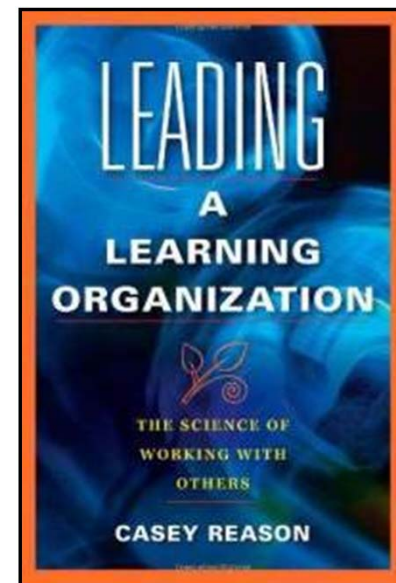
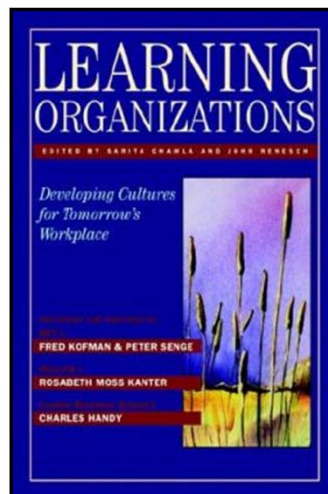
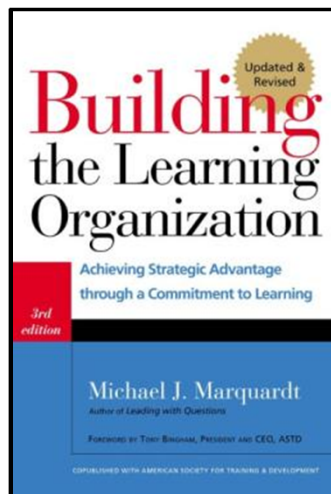
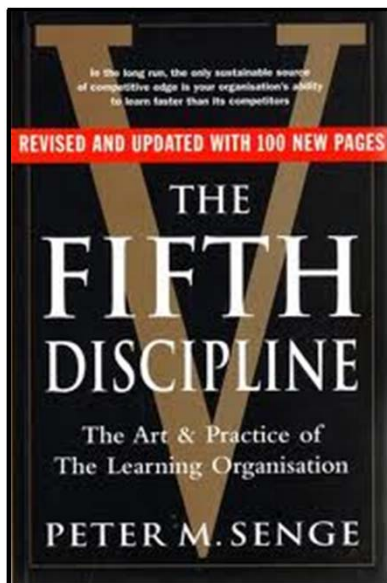
Since DoD Acquisition Organizations depend heavily on learning gains, where do they stand as “Learning Organizations (LOs)”?



This research set out to seek them out and better understand the key components that make them appropriately armed LOs... especially if the DoD expects to fulfill the current Better Buying Power (BBP) initiatives...and future ones like it over the long haul.

What is a Learning Organization?

The Literature says...



Is there a Learning Organization Blueprint the Acquisition Community Can Follow?

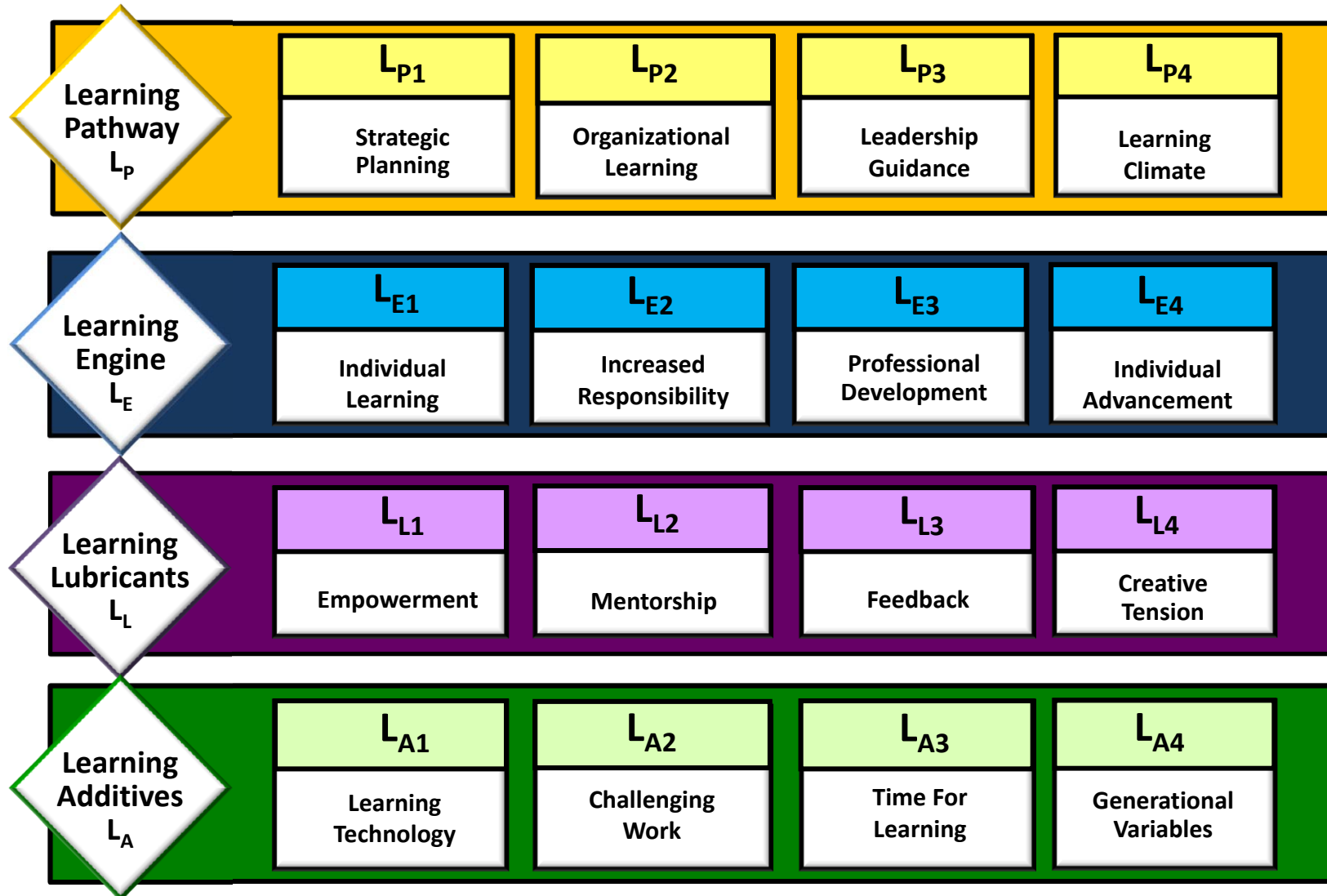


LO Features

Methodology

Assessment Basis

$LOs = f((\text{Learning Pathway } (L_{Pi}), \text{ Learning Engine } (L_{Ei}), \text{ Learning Lubricants } (L_{Li}), \text{ Learning Additives } (L_{Ai}))$



18 PROGRAM OFFICES AND DIRECTORATES

	Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS)		RQ-4A/B UAS GLOBAL HAWK
	Navy Virginia (SSN 774) Class Attack Submarine		WGS (MILSATCOM, AEHF, FAB-T, GBS)
	C-130/C130J Aircraft Modernization Program		National Polar-Orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS)
	B-2 Bomber and SATCOM and Computer Increment I		Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) – High Satellite
	F-35 Lightning II		Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV)
	C130J - Super Hercules		Global Positioning Systems (GPS) Directorate - GPS IIIA and NAVSTAR GPS
	MQ-9 UAS REAPER		Apache Block IIIA (AB3A) Remanufacture
	KC-46 Tanker		Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) and GMLRS Alternate Warhead
	F-22 Raptor		PEO Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C41)

Survey Specifics

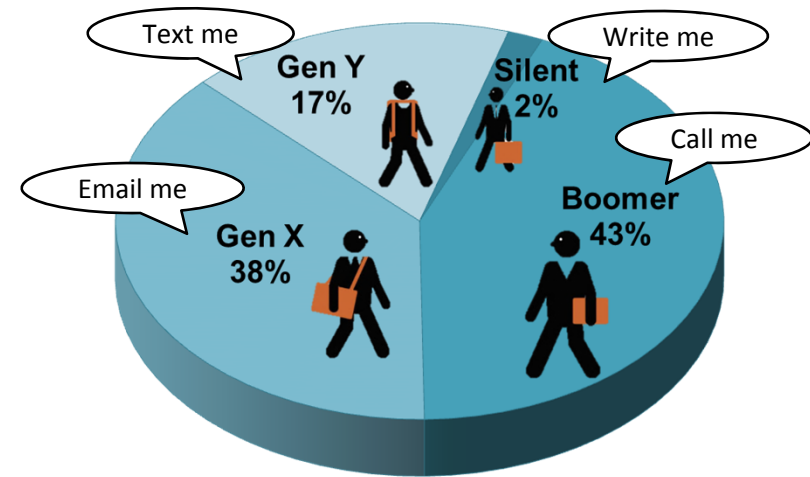
Results

LO Survey Instrument and Methodology

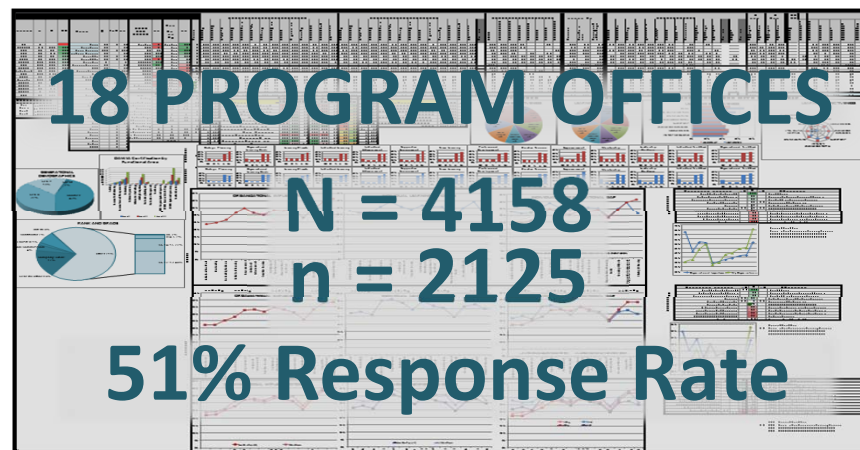


- 63 questions
- Likert scale: 1-7
- Questions mostly quantitative
- Several open ended questions
- Confidentiality maintained...
- No attribution
- 10 minutes to take...

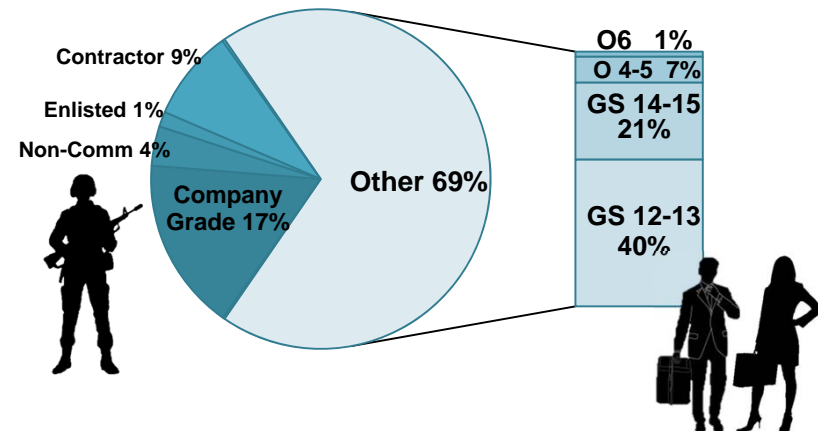
Age Demographics



What did the Data Say?

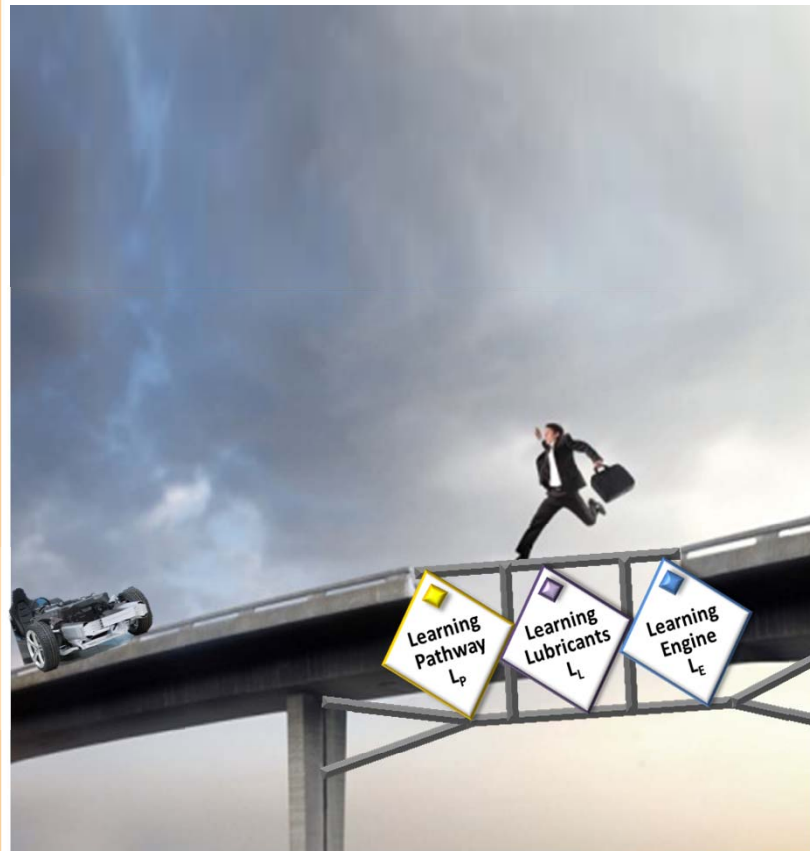


Rank and Grade Demographics

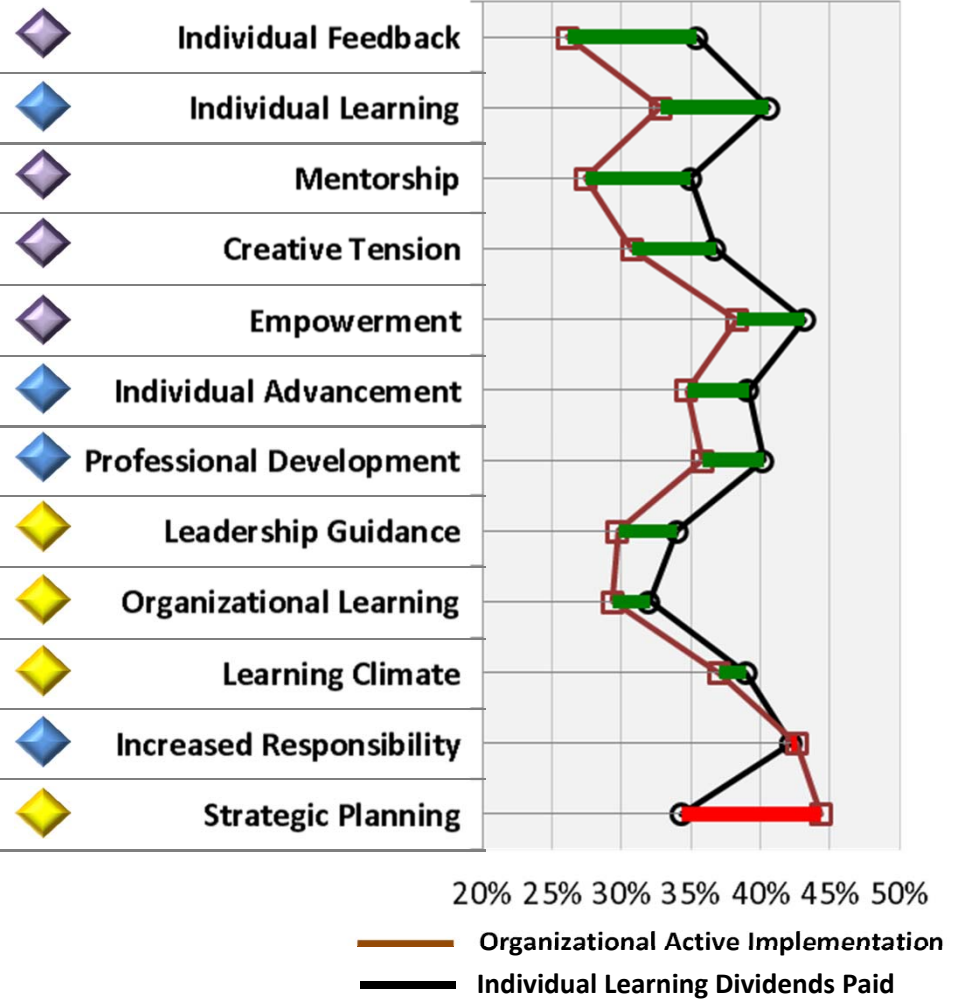


Aggregate Learning Gaps

Results



± Aggregate Program Office¹
Workplace Learning Gaps

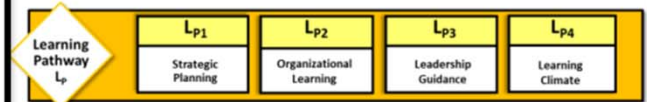


¹Responses represent "top two box" percentages

LEARNING PATHWAY

Results

How the Learning Elements Scattered for each of the 18 Organizations Queried and Examples of Catalysts



Strategic Plan:

integrate it, communicate it, make it more than shelf ware

Organizational Learning:

individuals learning should lead to the organization learning. The three critical factors are meaning, management, and measurement

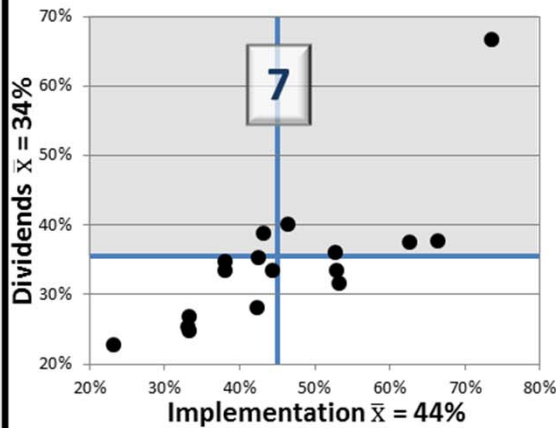
Leadership Guidance:

accountability with leaders

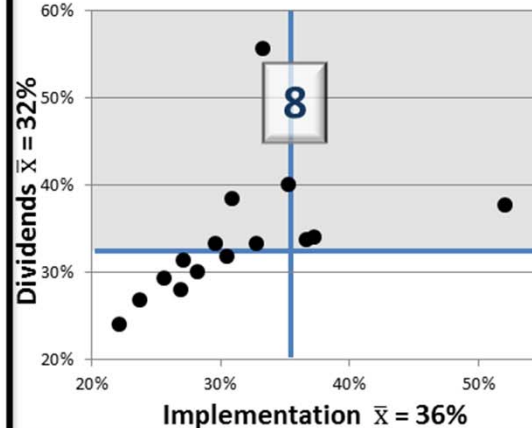
Learning Climate:

pushing the workforce to think critically and challenge the status quo

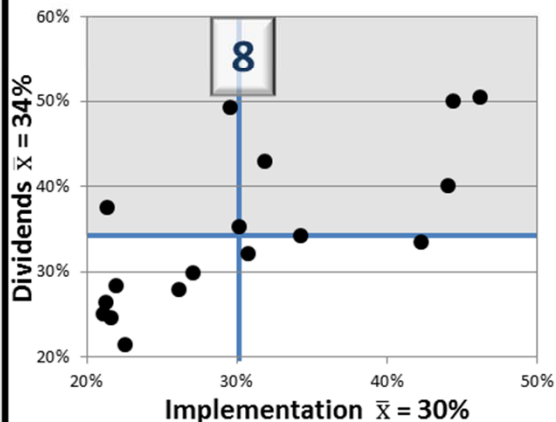
Strategic Planning (L_{p1})



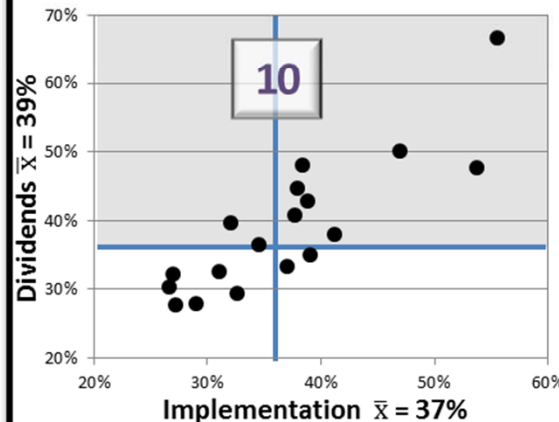
Organizational Learning (L_{p2})



Leadership Guidance (L_{p3})

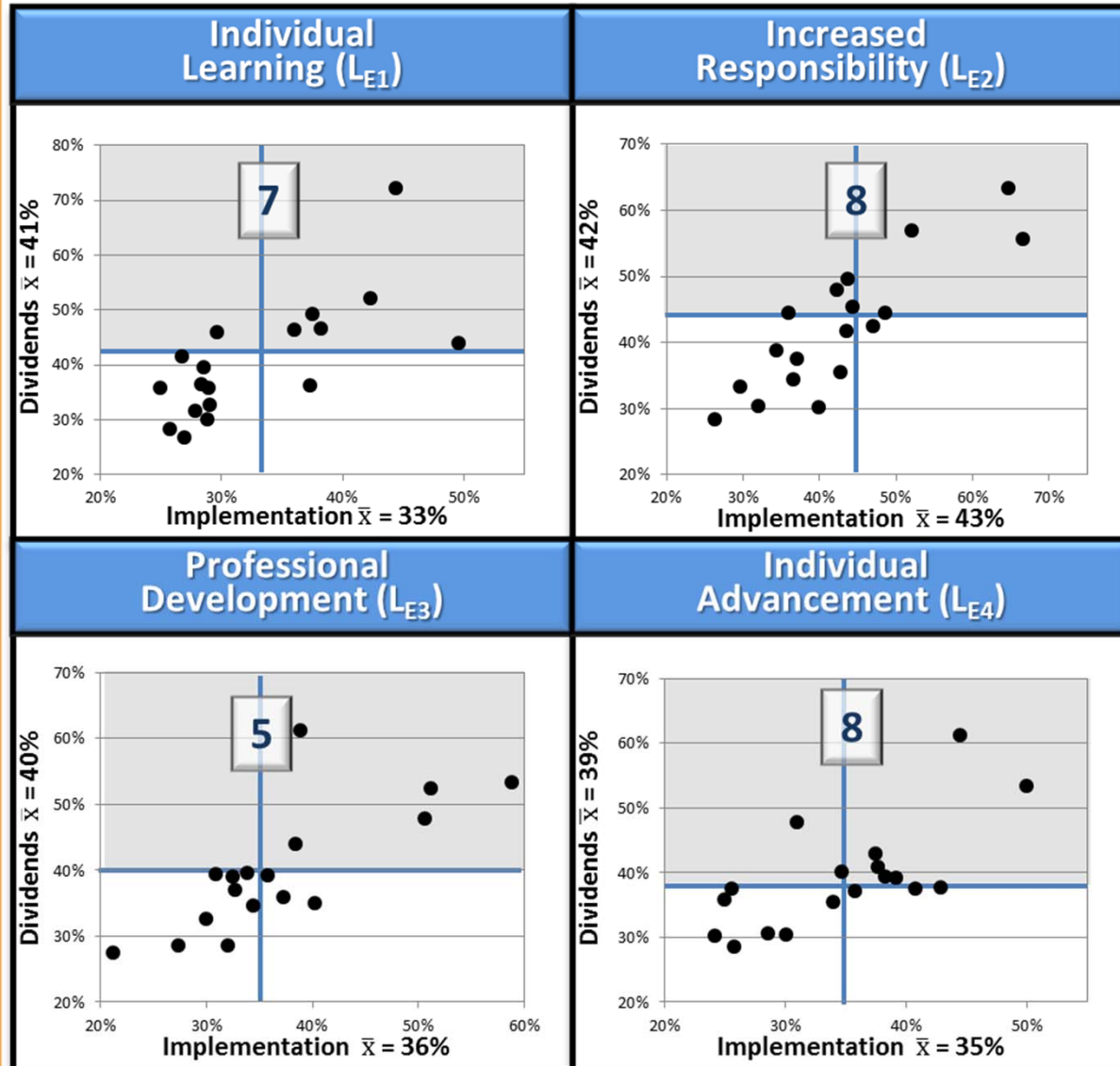


Learning Climate (L_{p4})



LEARNING ENGINE

Results



How the Learning Elements Scattered for each of the 18 Organizations Queried and Examples of Catalysts



Individual Learning:

put junior people in charge of briefings

Increased Responsibility:

Innovation doesn't live in the routine, encouraging persistence to challenge themselves

Professional Development:

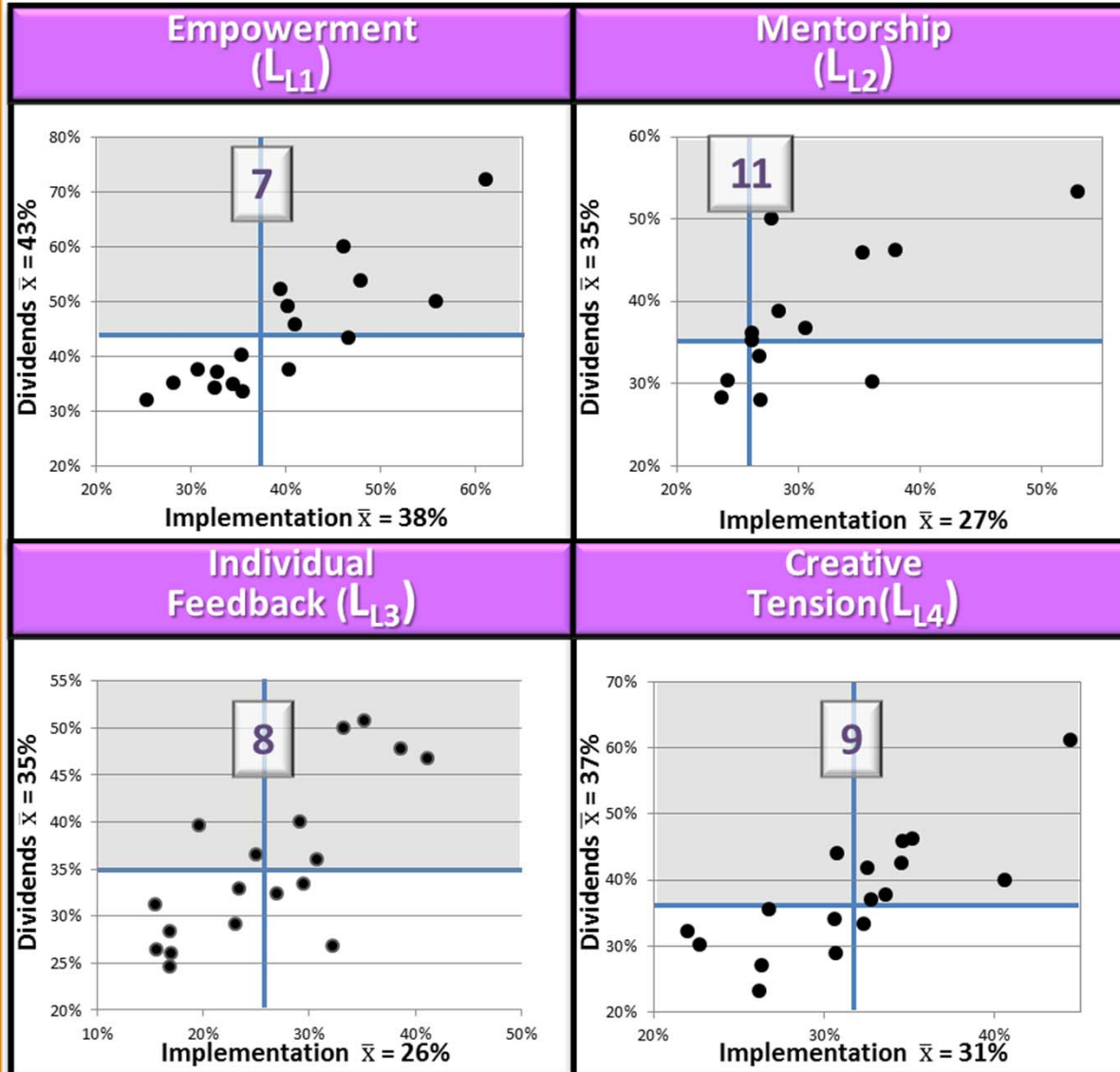
allow junior personnel to assume roles that are developmental and a stretch

Individual Advancement:

show how to advance, allow competitive individuals to diversify, accession models

LEARNING LUBRICANTS

Results



How the Learning Elements Scattered for each of the 18 Organizations Queried and Examples of Catalysts



Empowerment:

widely delegated “the authority” across their organization

Mentorship:

mentors must be willing to bear the responsibility for their employees' growth...too much formality leads to its death

Individual Feedback:

timely, respectful, accurate, carefully communicated, and void of negative undertones

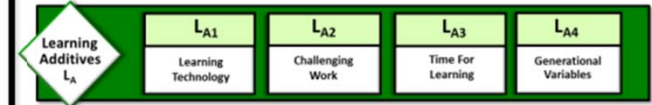
Creative Tension:

for the good of the product, healthy and respectful debate

LEARNING ADDITIVES

Results

How the Learning Elements Scattered for each of the 18 Organizations Queried and Examples of Catalysts



Learning Technology:

email as a learning tool is paying dividends, build email protocol and processes

Challenging Work:

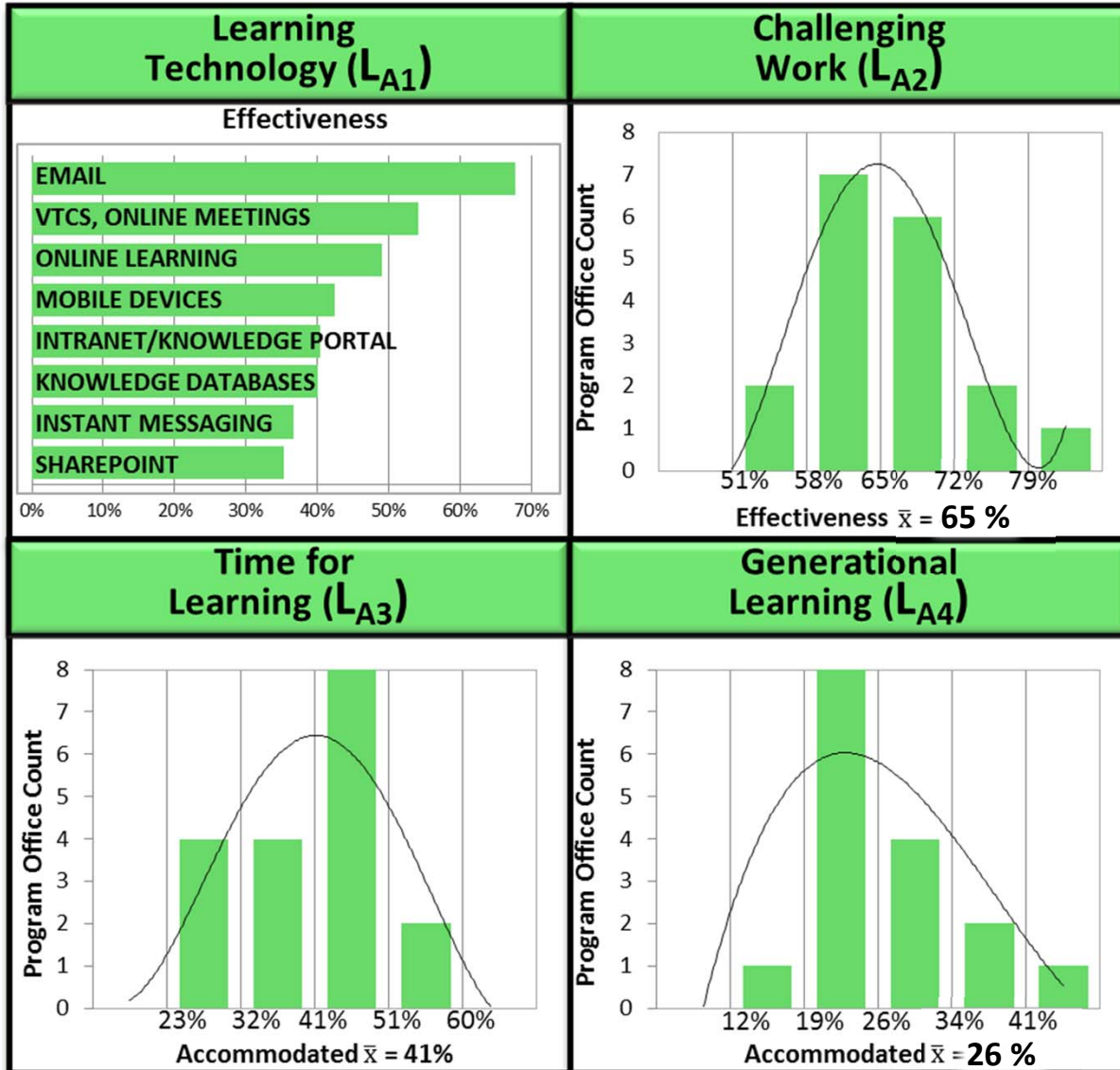
organizations achieve challenging work with a clear understanding of the sum of its parts

Time for Learning:

blended “just-in-time” learning, “ojt”, contests

Generational Learning:

give more attention to the development of your junior workforce





Program LO Scorecard—1 of the 18

Observations

Learning Pathway
L_P



Strategic Planning

- Not clear
- Outdated
- Ill-defined
- No measures



Organizational Learning

We don't implement what we learn.



Leadership Guidance

- Too tactical
- Needs structured opportunities to fill knowledge gaps



Learning Climate

- Time for learning & time for doing disconnect
- Work volume has forced rigid learning processes

Learning Engine
L_E



Individual Learning

- No time for 'individual' learning
- No time for formal OJT—must seek out others with the right experience



Increased Responsibility

In some cases, Program responsibility resides with the PM only



Professional Development

Encouraged to participate in learning opportunities



Individual Advancement

Not always focused on learning as a means for advancement

Learning Lubricants
L_L



Empowerment

- Restricted by processes
- Not encouraged to take risks in all cases



Mentorship

- Need mentorship at the start of the job
- Employees must seek out mentoring



Feedback

- In some cases, employees must solicit feedback
- Could be more timely



Creative Tension

Creative Tension is not always pervasive

Learning Additives
L_A



Learning Technology

VTCs and on-line meetings less valuable...



Challenging Work

Leaders seem very focused on tactical level challenges



Time For Learning

- Time for learning is always in conflict with time for doing
- Too busy working daily issues



Generational Variables

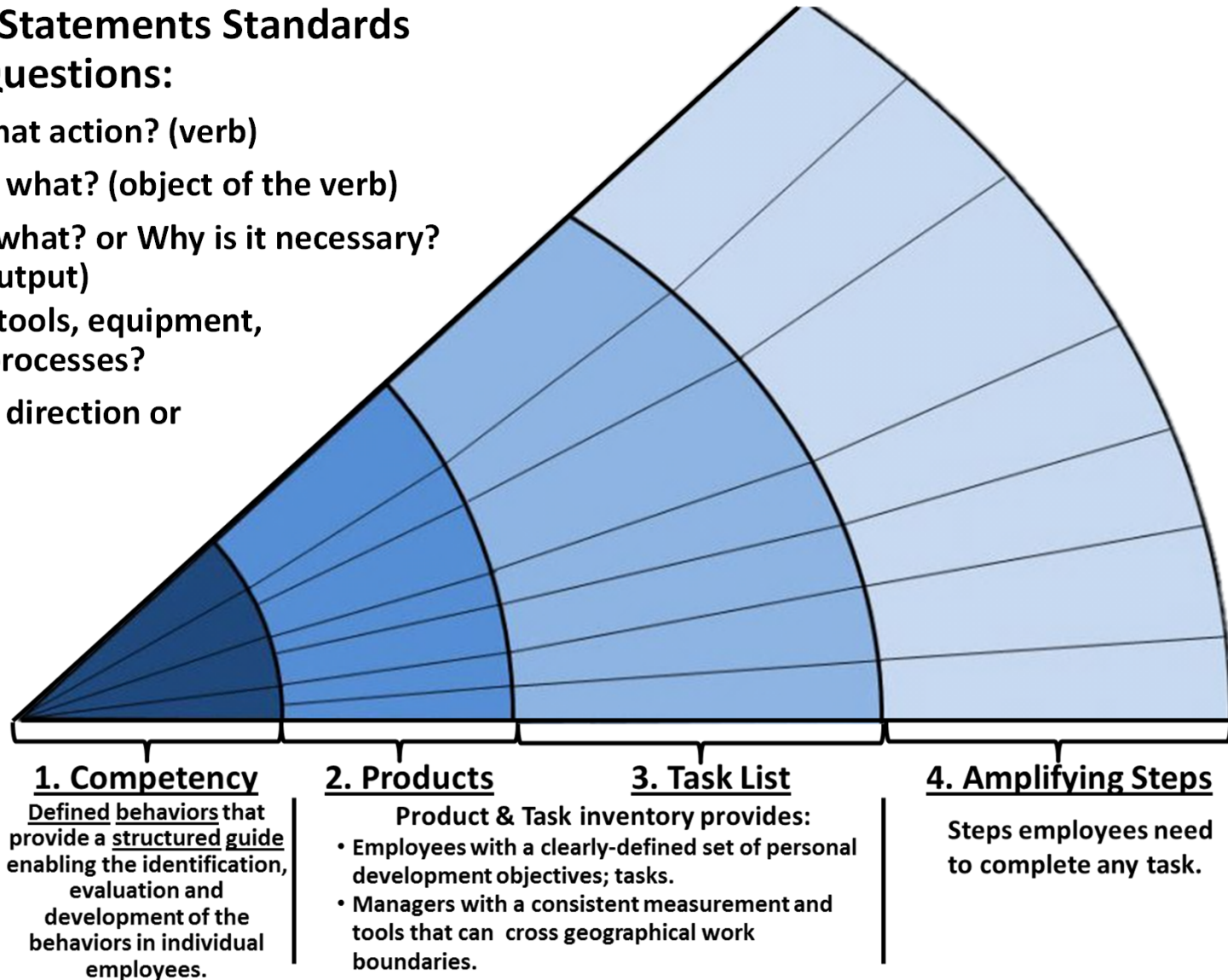
Entrance level personnel expect more focused support

Acquisition Workforce Qualification initiative (AWQi)

Observations

AWQi Task Statements Standards Address 5 Questions:

1. Performs what action? (verb)
2. To whom or what? (object of the verb)
3. To produce what? or Why is it necessary? (expected output)
4. Using what tools, equipment, work aids, processes?
5. Under what direction or guidelines?

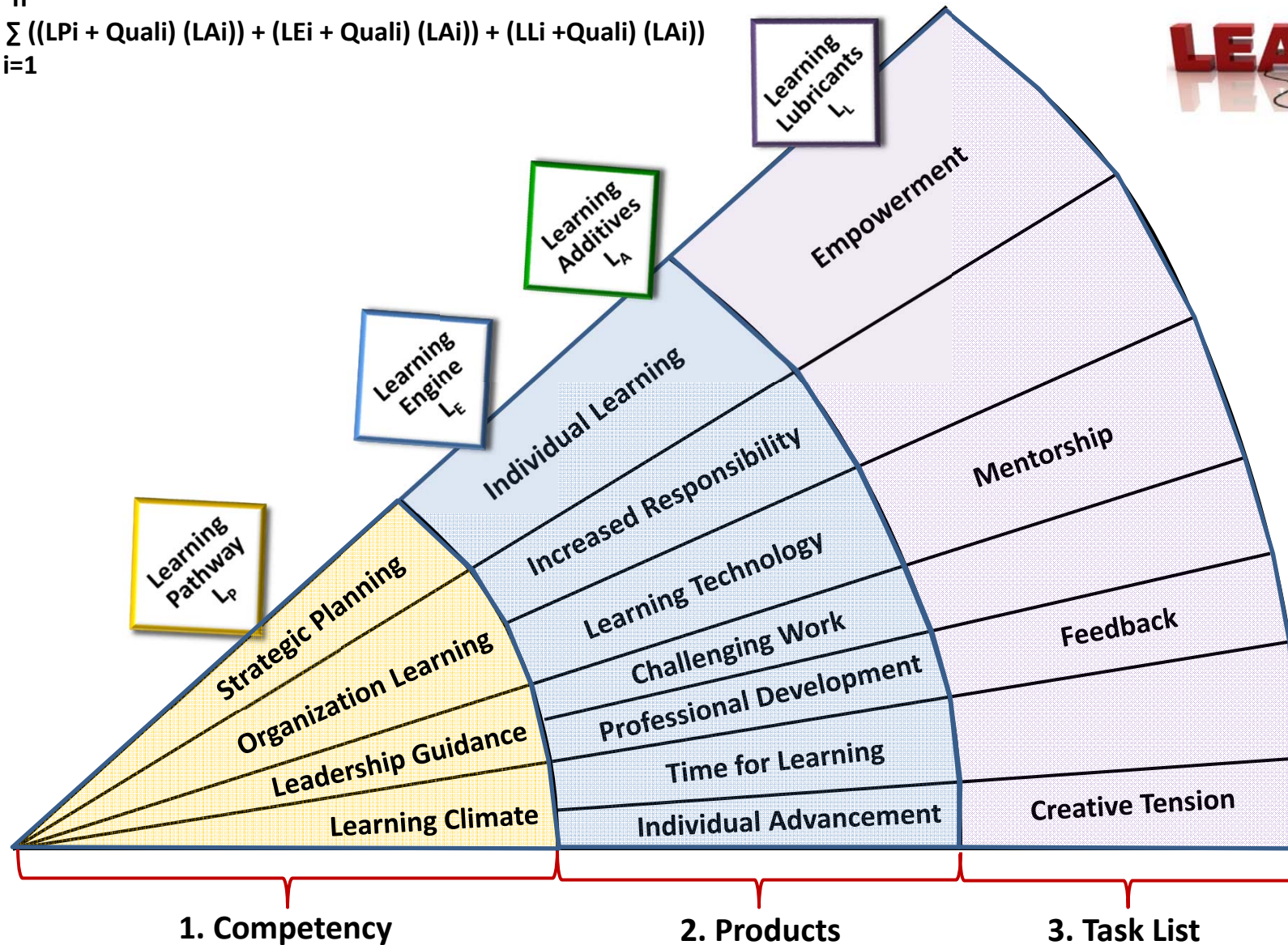


Acquisition Workforce Qualification initiative (AWQi) Connection to Learning Organizations (LOs)

Observations



$$LOs = \sum_{i=1}^n ((LP_i + Quali) (LAI_i)) + (LE_i + Quali) (LAI_i) + (LL_i + Quali) (LAI_i)$$



Summary

Observations

- Many organizations didn't fully appreciate the importance of workplace learning in general or understand the essence of "Learning Organizations"
- Data confirms presence of LO attributes and the contributions they make to workplace learning in acquisition organizations
- Identified high performing LOs and how they achieved it
- Established an LO benchmark for the acquisition community
- Debriefings to Program Offices amplified the areas that deserved more attention and subsequent action—several programs acted on findings
- Strong connection exists between LOs and AWQi—stronger LOs will more easily accommodate implementation of AWQi imperatives
- Potential for Further Research: Establish same benchmark for Industry

