



# Learning in Action: A Guide to Putting the Learning Organization to Work

*David A. Garvin*

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Most managers today understand the value of building a learning organization. Their goal is to leverage knowledge and make it a key corporate asset, yet they remain uncertain about how best to get started. What they lack are guidelines and tools that transform abstract theory—the learning organization as an ideal—into hands-on implementation. For the first time in *Learning in Action*, David Garvin helps managers make the leap from theory to proven practice. Garvin argues that at the heart of organizational learning lies a set of processes that can be designed, deployed, and led. He starts by describing the basic steps in every learning process—acquiring, interpreting, and applying knowledge—then examines the critical challenges facing managers at each of these stages and the various ways the challenges can be met. Drawing on decades of scholarship and a wealth of examples from a wide range of fields, Garvin next introduces three modes of learning—intelligence gathering, experience, and experimentation—and shows how each mode is most effectively deployed. These approaches are brought to life in complete, richly detailed case studies of learning in action at organizations such as Xerox, L. L. Bean, the U. S. Army, and GE. The book concludes with a discussion of the leadership role that senior executives must play to make learning a day-to-day reality in their organizations.

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