![bts logo - Strategy made personal]

Why Executives Need to Enhance Their Business Acumen

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Connected Learning Inspires Collaboration

Connected Learning is about people – not technology. For the last 50 years, information technology has been an enabler and facilitator of human capability. Technology-based learning emerged, extending the reach and transfer of knowledge. Now, the act of connecting ideas, people and action elevates learning to business improvement. This focus on outcomes defines the value and promise of Connected Learning.
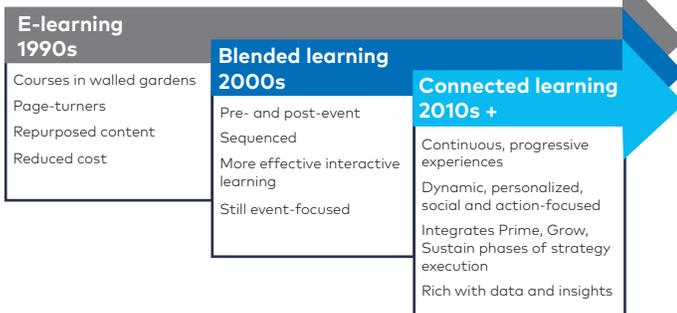
We live in a connected, networked world. Business strategy and execution should be connected, too. Connected Learning inspires collaboration that breaks down cultural and organizational barriers across divisions and geographies. It builds shared experience in successful execution and cross-pollination of best practices. By making and deepening relationships and nurturing vibrant social networks, Connected Learning creates a valuable long-term asset for both individuals and companies.

Online Learning: What It Was and Is Today

Online learning used to be just e-learning. It consisted of information modules hosted on a company's Learning Management System (LMS), based on the walled-garden thinking that was popular when dial-up was the leading way to access the Internet. Whether you call it "walled garden" or, as some have suggested, a "walled prison", the methodology reflected the confinement and lack of diversity found in tightly controlled environments. A walled garden is designed to provide users with security and simplicity and providers with control and cost containment. Within this environment, e-learning is push-based, primarily online, usually highly customized with a company's own content and often repurposed from classroom-based, instructor-led training.

E-learning 1990s	Blended learning 2000s	Connected learning 2010s +
Courses in walled gardens	Pre- and post-event	Continuous, progressive experiences
Page-turners	Sequenced	Dynamic, personalized, social and action-focused
Repurposed content	More effective interactive learning	Integrates Prime, Grow, Sustain phases of strategy execution
Reduced cost	Still event-focused	Rich with data and insights

While that was the standard at the end of the 20th century, today there are easier ways to provide security. Meanwhile, simplicity is not the highest value proposition for a business demographic, especially when younger talent is focusing on getting what they need fast, regardless of its source.

After the initial decade of e-learning, 'blended learning' emerged as a way to make learning events more effective. It gave rise to the pre/post approach to learning, combining classroom-based events with online modules. The focus remained on the event.

Today, the rise of social media, proliferation of mobile devices and the mash up of technologies brings us to the era of Connected Learning. How can these communications platforms increase the connection among participant and stakeholders in learning and strategy alignment initiatives? You may have had the experience of closely following people on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. When you finally meet them face-to-face, you feel you have known them for ages.

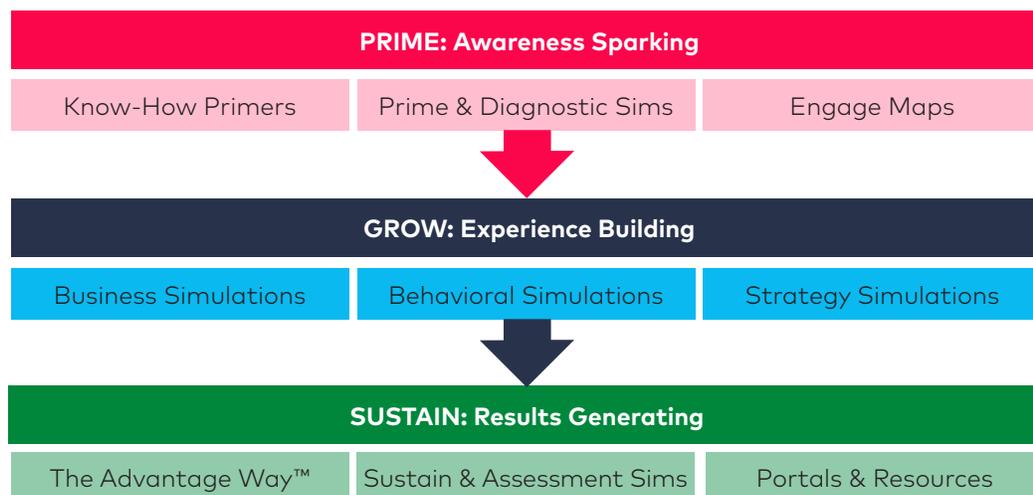| Connected Learning IS...	And IS NOT...
• Connected alignment and execution	• E-learning
• Web-enabled/virtual/mobile/blended	• Online only
• Interactive, personalized	• One-one push of content
• Action-focused experiences	• Knowledge transfer
• Prime-Grow-Sustain progressions	• Pre/post only
• Social	• Individual
• Improves with usage	• Static
• Value-focused initiatives	• Repurposed content, cost-focused
• Flexible	• One size fits all

Rather than replacing the traditional classroom environment, Connected Learning actively makes development and improvement initiatives more than the sum of their parts by building connections between live workshops and back-to-the-job.

Engaging All Phases and Levels of Strategy Execution

At its most basic level, Connected Learning enables progressions of digitally-enabled and virtually-bridged initiatives to drive alignment, mindset and capability around strategic priorities:

1. **PRIME:** Awareness sparking – Highly interactive online know-how modules, primer simulations and engage maps provide rapid knowledge transfer to large groups around a company's strategy or organization and prepare participants for decision-based experiences. Diagnostic simulations identify alignment and performance gaps.

2. **GROW:** Experience building – Flexible, web-enabled simulations build decision-making and behavioral skills in areas of strategy execution, business acumen, leadership and sales. This can include self-paced online experiences, virtual team based competitions and/or classroom-based group activities. Use of these simulations can also provide data and insights on strategy alignment and execution, as well as leadership and sales effectiveness.

3. **SUSTAIN**: Results generating – Ongoing learning and resources, such as targeted Sustain simulations for practice and portals to facilitate social learning, all embedding alignment, mindset and capability in the organization to generate results. In addition, the BTS Advantage Way™ system provides a full suite of processes, tools and techniques that support the entire change and performance management lifecycle. Assessment simulations provide certification and measurement of improvement.

Web-enabled, Virtual & Mobile Solutions for Accelerating Strategy Execution

PRIME: Awareness Sparking		
Know-How Primers	Prime & Diagnostic Sims	Engage Maps

GROW: Experience Building		
Business Simulations	Behavioral Simulations	Strategy Simulations

SUSTAIN: Results Generating		
The Advantage Way™	Sustain & Assessment Sims	Portals & Resources

Connected Learning is a critical tool for leaders seeking to harness the power of technology to accelerate execution of key strategic priorities. Through Connected Learning, participants can take ownership of their learning journeys. These learning journeys should include motivation, evaluation and building/maintaining connections.

Accelerating Development While Saving Time

Connected Learning plays a vital role in accelerating strategic alignment, mindset and capabilities. BTS, a world leading strategy implementation consultancy, has found that companies achieve better results faster when the workforce is aligned to the strategy, has the right mindset to approach execution with a sense of urgency and purpose, and has mastered the capabilities needed to execute effectively. BTS provides clients with expertise, learning technology and processes that have been developed, tested and optimized across hundreds of organizations worldwide.

When Hewlett-Packard needed to engage 3,000 managers in 60 days, for example, it turned to BTS. The solution was a customized business simulation experience that is web-enabled, making it exceptionally flexible. It can be run online for individuals and teams and in physical and virtual classroom settings. HP has used it successfully in all of these formats around the world.

A leading food and beverage company needed to accelerate execution of a new trade spend initiative. It asked BTS to create a web-enabled simulation and role play experience that enabled participants to practice successful execution of the strategy. The initiative consisted of a 300-participant conference with the team-based experience as its key engine. Later, the simulation went online so individuals could practice and the company could onboard new members of the sales team. Short "Sustain" simulations kept the focus on client-facing behaviors needed for success.

Experiences That Drive Measurable Business Results

Connected Learning provides experiences that accommodate different learning styles and schedules. In addition, one of the greatest opportunities is the data created through Connected Learning and the insights gleaned from that data. With data on

how individuals and teams make decisions in business, leadership and sales areas, management can quickly identify alignment and performance gaps within the organization. Who truly gets the core strategy? Who has the skills to effectively implement it? Web-enabled simulations can be used as assessments for alignment, mindset and capability. Learning can then be evaluated, even targeted, based on actual performance, not just for an individual but across a division or sector.

The Cloud Is a Good Thing

Many companies still believe that their learning programs should be hosted and maintained on their own LMS. However, businesses are now shifting from command-and-control to a more distributed leadership structure. Learning is moving to the cloud. Connected Learning joins a wide range of other business services (including customer management, knowledge management and core office productivity programs) that are shifting to the cloud for easy access, maintenance, updating and scalability. In fact, the data-intensity of BTS simulations and other discovery-based experiences makes the cloud a natural home.

Four Key Elements of Connected Learning

To build an effective Connected Learning program BTS applies the following guidelines:

1. **Continuous, progressive journeys:** Integrate Prime, Grow and Sustain elements to give change and improvement initiatives cohesion and momentum

2. **Personalization:** Enable the organization and participants to customize the experience to individual and team initiatives at all levels

3. **Practice and action:** Employ simulations to provide opportunities to practice, complemented with tools to facilitate action planning

4. **Why, what and how:** Focus not just on the how (capability), but also the what (alignment) and why (mindset)

In summary, BTS is bringing the experiences, tools and insights of Connected Learning to help its clients move beyond e-learning. The benefits are clear and the business results for learning and development are real and measurable.

About BTS

BTS focuses on the people side of strategy, working with leaders at all levels to help them make better decisions, convert those decisions to actions and deliver results. At our core, we believe people learn best by doing. For 30 years, we've been designing fun, powerful experiences™ that have profound and lasting impact on people and their careers. We inspire new ways of thinking, build critical capabilities and unleash business success. It's strategy made personal.

For more information, please visit www.bts.com.