

Book Review by ASTD's *T&D* magazine

Running Learning Like a Business

The Business of Learning: How to Manage Corporate Training to Improve Your Bottom Line

By David L. Vance
(Poudre River Press, 528 pp., \$65)

Reviewed by Paula Ketter, Editor *T&D*, March 2011

Learning departments must be run like a business. This concept is nothing new. But learning departments that fail to align to corporate objectives and strategies and lack disciplined execution can't gain the credibility to deliver bottom-line results to their organizations. *The Business of Learning*, written by the founding president of the award-winning Caterpillar University, is a must-have for any chief learning officer.

This practical guide gives step-by-step instructions on how to manage a learning function with all its complexities, and offers recommendations, checklists, examples, templates, and tips to successfully implement a new learning department strategy. There is a sample business plan for learning, 180 tables and graphs, and a five-page glossary of terms.

There is even comprehensive information about meeting with the CEO—how to prepare for the meeting; the rationale behind a learning initiative, strategy, or culture change; and the questions you need to be prepared to answer. As Jack Phillips, chairman of the ROI Institute, wrote in an endorsement, "One of the biggest challenges with the learning and development function is to be clearly connected to the business. David Vance shows a road map to connect learning to the business from the very beginning to evaluation. [This book] is the most comprehensive treatment available on the topic of running a learning and development function like a business."

Numerous important questions are answered in this comprehensive resource. You've all heard the phrase, "speaking the language of business." But what does that really mean? Vance explains the language of finance and financial measurement, why organizations exist (mission), how organizations measure success and track progress, and how to read financial statements.

This book leaves no stone unturned and should be on every learning professional's bookshelf. I give it four lattes.

Paula Ketter is editor of T+D; pketter@astd.org.