

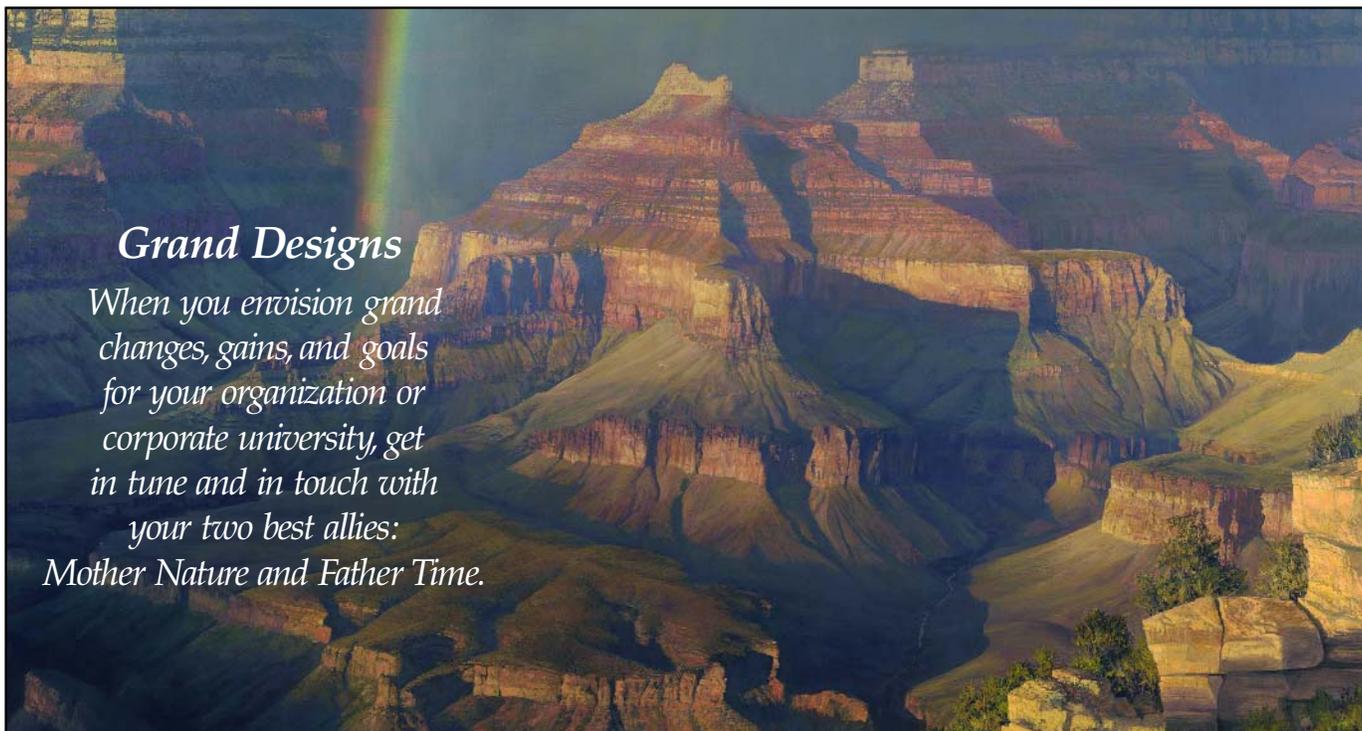
# LEADERSHIP Excellence™



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## Grand Designs

*When you envision grand changes, gains, and goals for your organization or corporate university, get in tune and in touch with your two best allies: Mother Nature and Father Time.*

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# Cracking the Code

Turn knowledge workers into knowledge warriors.



by Jonathon Levy

**L**EADERS CAN GAIN competitive leverage by giving every knowledge worker the tools they need to become knowledge warriors. The learner is positioned—and willing—to take charge of the learning process. Leaders can capture inherent knowledge, blend it with vetted knowledge, and make it available a bit at a time, on demand as required.

The technologies are now on hand for the strategic deployment of knowledge assets, but a new way of thinking about learning is required—a real-time system that offers an integrated blend of human and digital content to provide knowledge workers with the required new skills and knowledge daily.

Knowledge workers are victims of greatly increased demand arising from new information sources and channels and beneficiaries because those same technologies promise them extraordinary leverage and performance support.

The enterprise needs to capture its own collective knowledge and enhance its collective awareness. The technology that powers this new model of knowing exists, but we need to use the technology differently. Traditional courses and delivery methods are making way for more robust and performance-related learning strategies: not degrees, but “dynamic competencies;” not just in case, but just in time; not mass product, but personalized, on-the-spot knowledge. The new focus is on the learner.

The difference is profound. The required knowledge solution doesn’t exist until the learner presents himself; and the solution is “tailored” for each individual on the spot. This is the end of eLearning as we know it. Our brief experience with eLearning has propelled us to High Performance Learning. We are positioned to crack the code.

There are three sides to the learning proposition: learner, knowledge, and means or process of gaining knowledge. Clearly the *most* important element is the *learner*—the one for whom the process of learning exists. Until recently, however, all formal education has

focused on *the knowledge* (the subject-matter expert and content), and the *means of gaining knowledge*. But all that is changing. As leaders recognize that many important knowledge assets are stored in their people’s heads, their focus is shifting from the *knowledge* as a commodity to the *learner* as a key resource.

This is already starting to happen. Steven Schuller, VP of Wyndham International, is developing knowledge networks for Web-based, real-time, peer-to-peer mentoring. Jim Mitnick, senior VP of Turner Construction Company, is moving toward virtual collaboration via wireless devices that provide real-time knowledge gap analysis. Joy Hunter, CLO of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, is making learning informal and continuous via a system that anticipates and pushes learning as



required. George Wolfe, dean of global learning for Steelcase University, is capturing the genius within the enterprise to target inherent skills and competencies through social network analysis and knowledge sharing.

Virtual capability is now driving the creation of networks to identify, channel, and integrate a company’s collective knowledge for those who need it.

The new focus centers on human consciousness in a powerful integrated solution that is less focused on content and technology and more on the recipient.

### Three Characteristics

Since knowledge rapidly changes we need to leverage it in service of performance in real time. Imagine a knowledge system with these traits:

**1. Leverage collective intelligence**—identifying, capturing, and transpar-

ently linking the knowledge that people carry in their heads with vetted sources of knowledge, and delivering it in the right context to the right people in the right amount at the right time.

**2. Embedding carbon in the silicon**—combining potential human coaches/advisors with personalized learning objects within the same platform at the time they are needed.

**3. Real-time change management**—aligning corporate data with information from the knowledge management system and learning resources from the learning management system; and using the combined data in a dashboard that increases agility and helps management through change in real time.

Cracking the code is not about technology; it is about agility. Upgrading technology without upgrading the *strategy* can be an empty investment.

### Five Measures of Quality

Five principles guide the application of technology to learning:

**1. Learning is about the learner, not the provider.** “Best” generation solutions will always be simple, natural, and life-supporting for the user, addressing the demands of time and context.

**2. The solution leverages both the knowledge of the learner and the knowledge of colleagues.** Is the knowledge worker driving his own solution? Is the knowledge in the enterprise acquired, encoded, and available on the same platform with other learning objects?

**3. The solution is a business solution, not an academic one.** A business solution provides people with the knowledge they need for that moment. Expertise is not something that one has, it is something that one uses—the result of a creative interface of individual knowledge and supportive knowledge.

**4. The knowledge solution is a critical component of strategy and a powerful tool for achieving the vision.** If your corporate “university” is behaving like a traditional university, blow it up. You need expertise and performance.

**5. The solution addresses unpredictable circumstances.** The quality of such a system is proportional to its flexibility, the degree to which changing requirements can be detected and solutions made available in real time.

In separating what is useful from what is traditional, we will crack the code to discover true quality.

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**ACTION:** Use knowledge to achieve the vision.