GROWING AS A LEARNING LEADER

Executive Summary

The Learning Guild recently launched The Learning Leaders Alliance, a community for learning leaders who want to stay ahead of the curve and for aspiring leaders wanting to build their skillsets; this report is designed to dovetail with that effort. In researching leaders and leadership the literature is clear on one thing: Nothing is clear. There are myriad theories of leadership, each one seemingly adopted by another consultant group or popular press author, with ideas that go in and out of style across decades. Some take the approach model, differentiating between, for instance, transactional v. transformational leadership style. Some say effective leadership is situational, with leadership not a static construct but flexing according to circumstances. Others embrace trait theory, looking at concepts like loyalty and charisma. Still others define leadership as "participatory", "authentic", "ethical", and "servant" (Haight 2017; Deshwal & Ali, 2020). Several leadership theories emerged as a critique on previous theories or as an extension or aggregation of existing theories. (Daniels et al. 2019). So rather than try to pin down one specific model, this report looks to answer: "What is a learning leader?" with a particular eye toward the aspirational: What behaviors, skills, and characteristics do emerging leaders—and learning leaders in particular—appear to share, and how can these be built and enhanced?

This report looks at commonalities shared by emerging leaders and those leaders aspiring to next-level roles, and offers tips for developing the skills and behaviors that will help support further development. Some themes that emerged from the review of information are the need for self-development, the importance of stepping outside one's immediate sphere, and the idea that informal leaders are becoming increasingly important and influential in a decreasingly-hierarchical business world.

To download the full report, click here.