**The Human Cost of Poorly Implemented LMS**

**You Lose Top Performers and Neurodivergent Thinkers Because of This**

Ben was working in sales for a very well-known company. He always knew he was a slow reader, but didn’t know why. When his daughter was diagnosed with dyslexia, he realized that he also had dyslexia. He saw that she experienced the same struggles that he dealt with when he was in school. It never occurred to him that he might have a learning disability.

He was successful at hiding his learning disability for decades until his company shifted toward a learning management system (LMS) to deliver information about new products more quickly. The new LMS required employees to take computerized tests in order to be certified to sell the new products.

As Ben was taking these tests, the numbers and letters were flipping, turning backwards. When he brought the issue to senior management, begging for alternative learning options, he was turned away.

As a result, after being one of the top performing sales reps for years, he got a less-than-stellar performance review. These tests cast a glaring light on his dyslexia.

## **A Missed Opportunity**

Eventually, he felt he had no choice but to find another job with a company that was more flexible and willing to work with him despite his learning disability. His now former company, one that was spearheading an initiative to hire neurodivergent employees, let one of their top-performing neurodivergent sales reps go out the door. What a senseless loss to the company and to the employee!

Learning disabilities are more common than one might think: Learning disabilities follow individuals from school to work. This matters because when companies fail to recognize that the path to learning is not the same for everyone, they lose valuable employees, even their top performers. Worse, they often lose seasoned employees and decades worth of acquired institutional knowledge because of a system change that requires upskilling.

It’s very expensive for a company to find and replace talent. Companies which don’t recognize that there are many ways to teach their employees will continue to lose great talent.

## **Pay Attention to People, Not Numbers**

Sadly, companies often embrace initiatives like LMS in an effort to save money by bringing in systems that use algorithms and artificial intelligence to determine whether an employee is hitting the mark. When salespeople pitch these systems they glorify numbers that present a picture of substantial savings.

However, what is often missing from that colorful pie chart is the cost of replacing hard-working, loyal employees lost due to the lack of personalization, human understanding, and people-centered problem solving in their LMS metrics.

The clichẻ that one hand doesn’t know what the other hand is doing might be appropriate here. So often, companies make decisions in silos. Ben’s manager saw his value. She knew that he was one of their top performing sales reps. Yet, because of policies regarding how people were certified to sell the new products, her hands were tied. She knew he could sell the product better than anybody else in the department. He just could not demonstrate his understanding on a standardized test.

The number crunchers, who were purely looking at the test scores, didn’t see Ben as a human being who was bringing profit to the company. They only saw him as a number on a spreadsheet.

## Finding the Person in the Middle

So, what’s the solution? That answer, unfortunately, is not simple. And the larger the corporation, the more complicated it gets. Possibly, it starts with a company culture that is more people-centered and less numbers-centered. Yes, profit is important, however, “It doesn’t take long before the employee is seen and treated as a cog in the machine. They feel like second class citizens — not unique, creative beings capable of great things.” writes Jeb Banner, in [*Four Ingredients for a People-Centered Workplace.*](https://www.smallbox.com/blog/four-ingredients-for-a-people-centered-workplace/)

For Ben, the only solution available to him was to leave a company that he loved and that had profited from his hard work for years. He took his talent, his experience, his knowledge of the company, and his sales contacts and went to work for a competitor. That is not the scenario any company hopes for when they implement an LMS or some other performance-measurement initiative.

Has your company experienced this issue? Are you wrestling with the problem of good employees walking out the door because of a policy change or new performance initiative? Tell me about it in the response section.

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International speaker and author, Susan Fitzell,M.Ed., CSP, works with educators, organization leaders, and employees to discover their personal learning preferences. She works to establish cultures of learning that keep organizations competitive and increase the ROI of their people investments. This helps organizations reduce costs while increasing profits and retention. She helps leaders understand the motivation drivers that engage their employees and provides unique solutions that transform performance by teaching people how they learn .Susan provides unique solutions that transform performance by teaching people how they learn.

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