

Reimagining and Accelerating **Leader Development** at 3M: A Social Learning Success Story



Table of Contents

Introduction: The Impact of Change on Learning and Development.....3

Obstacles to Building Leadership Capabilities5

Transforming Leader Development at 3M8

Inside the Four Sections of the Process:16

Authors and Contributors17

About NovoEd.....18

About Brandon Hall Group.....19

Introduction:

The Impact of Change on Learning and Development

We are living in times of seismic change. The workplace is becoming more diverse, bringing about the need for new and inclusive ways of working together that harness human differences for all their productive potential.

What Distinguishes This Moment in the History of Work:

An increasingly diverse workforce in which five generations are working together requires new ways to develop alignment and inclusivity.

Automation and AI are creating anxiety and opportunity.

Convergence of industries and agglomeration of domains means skills and functions clustering together in new ways.

New forms of work, from the gig economy to hybrid and platform work, affect the balance between workers and organizations.

Social and political polarization and fragmentation permeate the workplace dynamics.

What does capability look like in this age of disruption?

NovoEd, a social and collaborative learning platform that drives enterprise capability at scale, defines it informally this way:

IQ + EQ + Practical Wisdom = Capability

Capabilities are future-oriented abilities (such as inclusive leadership, design thinking) that make individuals, teams, and organizations robust and resilient. They are acquired through intensive learning that goes beyond knowledge acquisition, and even practice and application, to include awareness, context, community and courageous action. In the context of workforce development, capabilities are about performance readiness and agility built from within.



Author, *The Exponential Age*

“Exponential technologies are being driven by three mutually reinforcing factors — the transformative power of learning by doing, the increasing interaction and combination of new technologies and the emergence of new networks of information and trade ... we also need to understand the political and economic context ... the disruptive power of the Exponential Age does not just lie in exponential change itself. It lies in the way humans respond to this change.”



CLO of Walmart
Author of *L&D's Playbook for the Digital Age*

“L&D should be the single source of truth for capability across the enterprise. It should gather, translate and present the data that informs the business on whether its strategies can be executed.”

Obstacles to Building Leadership Capabilities

In many ways, leadership is the ultimate context-driven capability, requiring a blend of cognitive, empathic and practical skill. The corporate learning function has struggled to develop true capabilities in leaders.

L&D teams churn out an endless array of courses and programs but leaders tend to forget much of what they learned because it is impractical, and rarely reinforced. They lack opportunities to practice their skills and exchange ideas and experiences with their peers.

Research by Brandon Hall Group shows that only one-third of organizations have an effective learning strategy or can prove that their leader development programs improve leaders' ability to drive business growth.



33%

Organizations with effective
macrolearning strategy

Source: Brandon Hall Group Optimizing Learning to Drive Performance Study

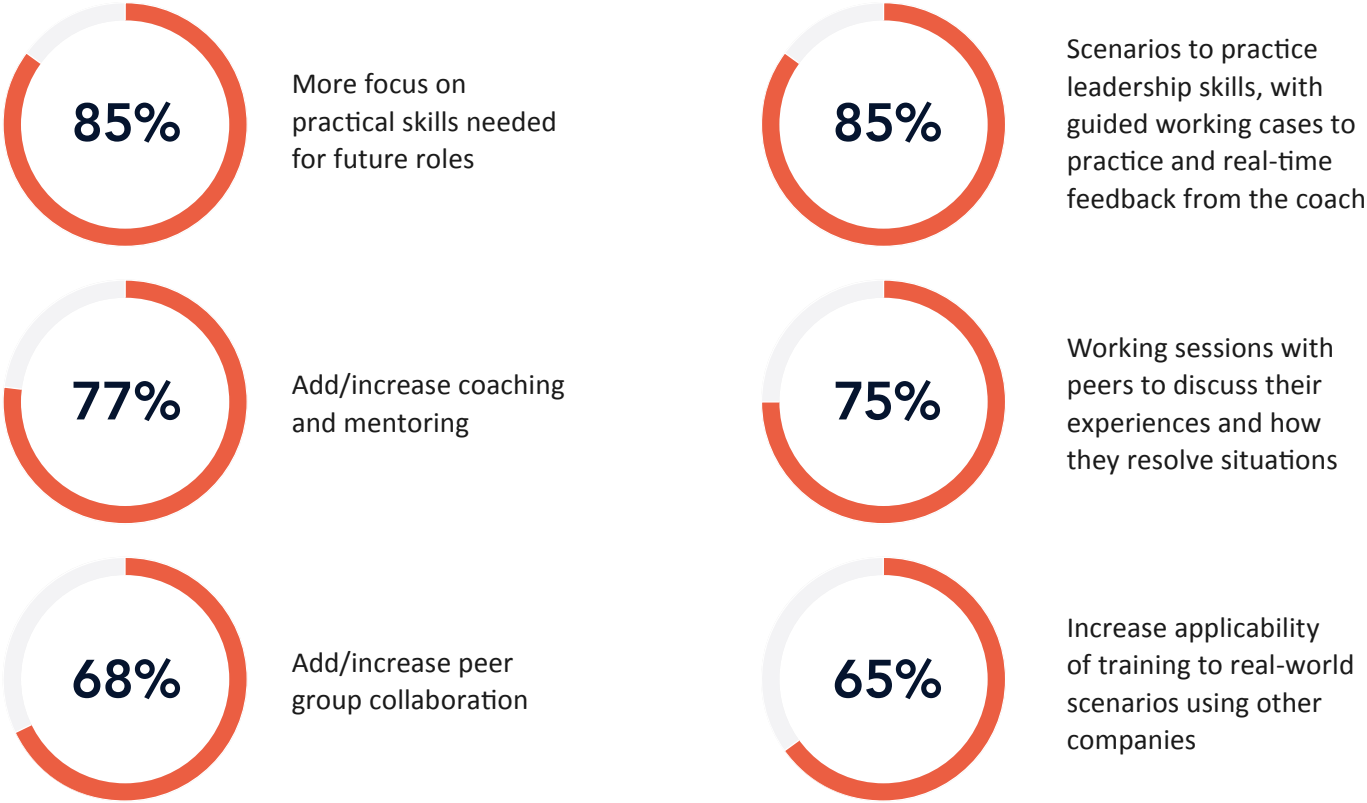
33%

“We can definitely prove
leadership development
improves our ability to
meet business objectives.”

Source: Brandon Hall Group Impact of Leadership Development Study

Employers are feeling a lot of pressure to create leader development programs that deliver better results for the management and the business. Brandon Hall Group annually asks L&D leaders how leadership development can be improved. They increasingly understand that leadership development needs to be practical — not merely focusing on applying leadership skills now but giving leaders the skills they need for future roles. They understand that they must give leaders opportunities to interact with each other to discuss and practice their skills in a scenario-based setting so they can gain experience and make mistakes in a safe environment and receive feedback from coaches.

How Can Leadership Development Be Improved?



(Rating of 4 or 5 on 5-point scale)

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study, How Do We Improve Leadership Development?

A critical challenge to improving leader development is delivering leader training that is more practical, experiential and personalized. **Brandon Hall Group's study on upskilling and reskilling showed that the biggest challenge for employers is not having the technology ecosystem in place to deliver personalized learning.** There are other challenges as well — the expense and a lingering belief by some organizations that one-size-fits-all learning is sufficient. But having the right technology in place is seen as the biggest need.

What Are the Top Challenges to Delivering Personalized, Continuous Learning?

There is no technology ecosystem in place to develop, deliver personalized learning at scale.



We believe it would be too expensive.



We believe a one-size-fits-all approach to learning is sufficient.



We believe it would be too difficult to administer and maintain.



Our learning organization is not trained properly to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.



(Rating of 4 or 5 on 5-point scale)
Source: Brandon Hall Group Study
Upskilling/Reskilling Study



Transforming Leader Development at 3M

Employers that have embraced technology to build a more experiential learning process have been able to improve their leadership development programs.

3M, the Minnesota-based multinational conglomerate operating in the fields of industry, worker safety, health care and consumer goods, partnered with NovoEd to transform its learning ecosystem. 3M's goal was to ignite a growth mindset and a learning culture where everyone takes the time to learn.

The transformation is a continuous journey. Like diversity, equity and inclusion, an organization never really "arrives" at a destination because situations continually evolve. But 3M has made continuous improvements over the past four years.

3M Learning



We equip 3Mers with
the skills of tomorrow
so that we can
advance 3M today.



Aligning Learning Offerings Globally

The 3M learning team had six areas worldwide operating in a largely decentralized model. Each area, and sometimes even business groups, were handling learning differently. Alignment on these offerings would create equity and enable the L&D team to build the culture and skills needed to improve the overall experience.

3M started by looking at the content, which was not ideal and expensive to create. The expense meant supervisors could only get trained if they were nominated. 3M began looking at vendors that had content to support the company's business goals and could offer the training to more people in a variety of languages for ILT, VILT and digital.

Increasing the Scope of Learning Experiences

Pre-pandemic, 3Mers liked their in-person learning because of the connections and relationships it built. Learning professionals, who understood that digital experiences could create connections while increasing access in ways that resonated with new generations of learners, had other ideas.



What we want to try to do ...

But as a traditional company, digital transformation for learning wasn't an easy mindset shift.

"There was a ton of apprehension," said Maryann Thomas, Career and Onboarding Portfolio Learning Leader for 3M. "So I worked with my talented team and wrote a business proposal. We said, 'if we could improve the scope of learning without reducing quality or increasing cost, would you be interested?'"

"Colleagues said we had already reduced cost and increased reach, so why do we need to do more? They said they were busy, but we countered that more digital would allow them to do learning on their own time. We also heard 'prove it.'"

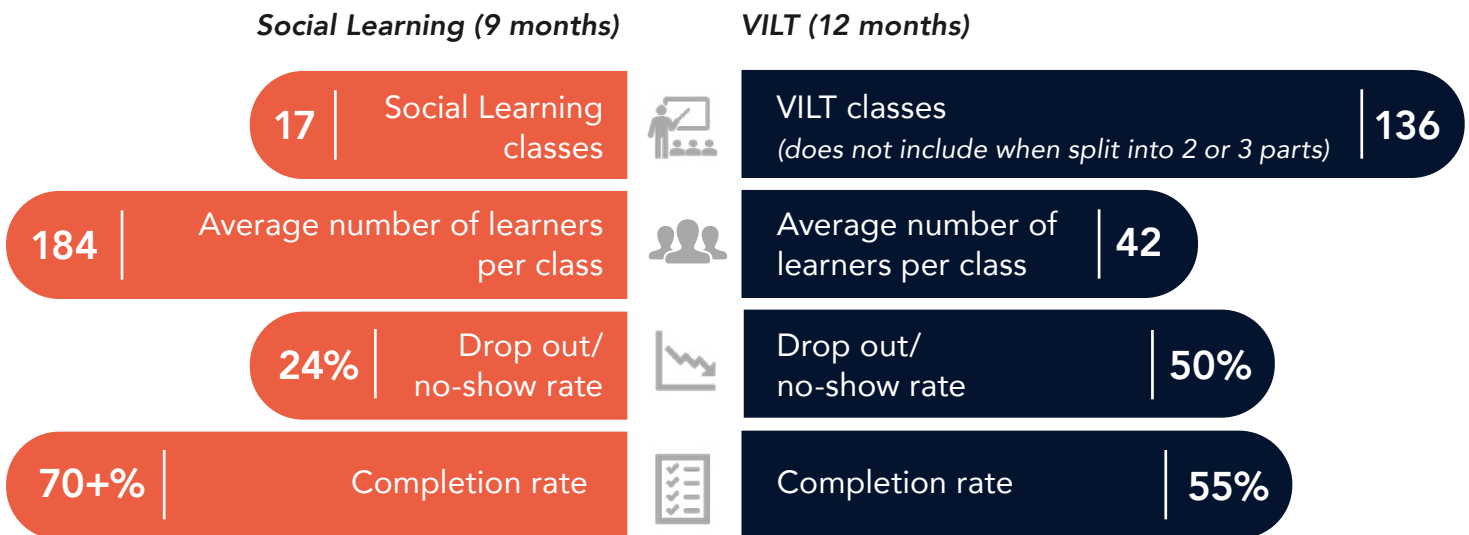
Thomas partnered with NovoEd to test social learning. The learning team had not designed content for social learning before, so it had to adapt content to the new modality without changing the objectives of the learning. Learning program managers and even facilitators needed to be upskilled.



"There was skepticism and feelings at every turn," Thomas said. "However, it was pretty easy to prove the impact with the numbers we saw."

The average number of learners per class in social learning was four times the VILT number. Completion rates improved by 15 percentage points and dropout rates were cut in half.

Comparison of Modalities for Supervisor Courses



Source: 3M

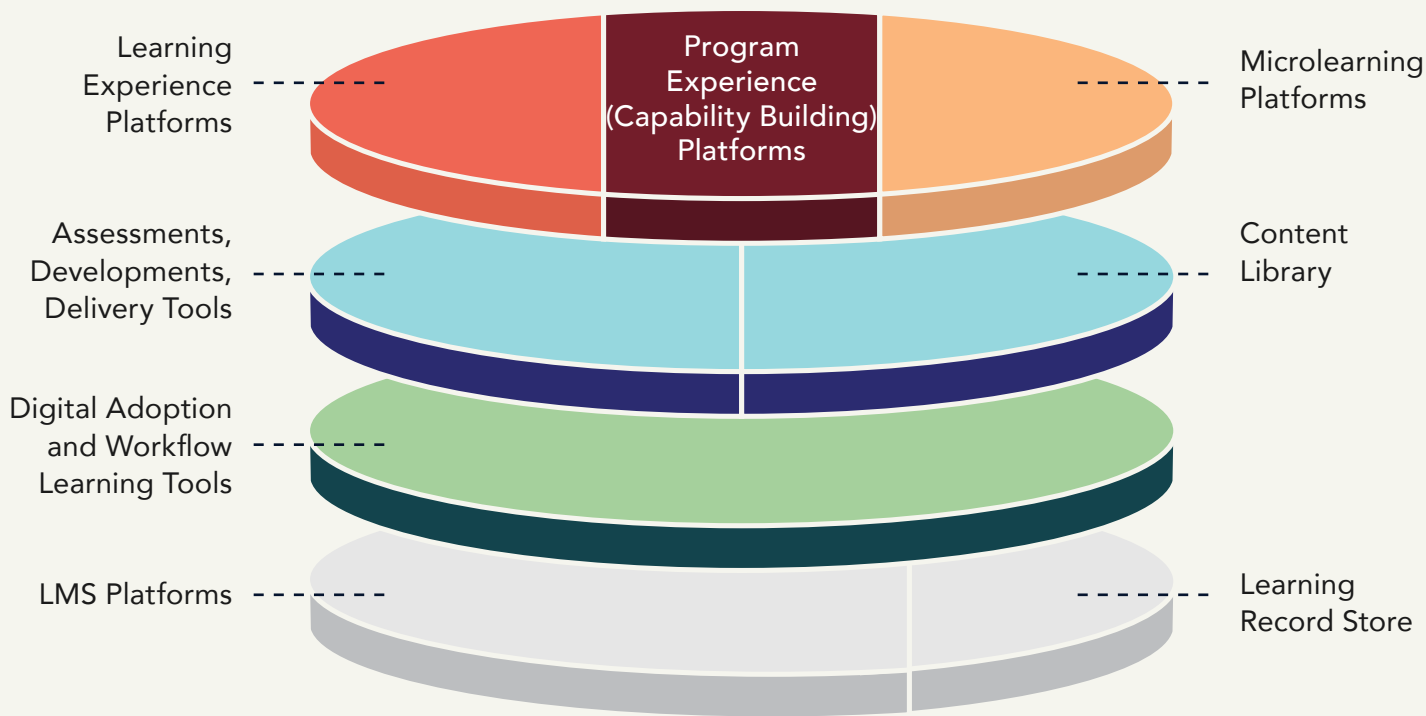
“Data matters,” Thomas said. “In the social learning courses, we could *prove* learners did the work. They had assignments and points to demonstrate their work. In our VILT, we couldn’t prove they did anything during the sessions. Showing those results in data form is amazing!”

In comparing course evaluations between VILT and social learning, the metrics on the basics were almost identical. However, social learning scored significantly higher in two critical areas:

- How well the employees were able to apply the learning.
- The learners’ belief that the learning would improve their performance.

Social learning enables a complete and cohesive learning experience that includes practice and application, discussion and feedback, team-based learning, mentoring, curated and goal-aligned content and more.

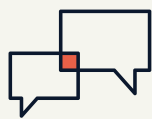
A Cohesive Learning Experience: Bringing it all Together



----- Filling a gap in the learning ecosystem -----



Practice & Application



Discussion & Feedback



Team-Based Learning



Mentors & Managers



Curated & Goal-Aligned Content



Effective Facilitators

Reimagining and Accelerating Leader Development at 3M: A Social Learning Success Story

To test social learning, 3M used a very well-known course, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Thomas and her team thought the principles were timeless and what their leaders needed. Below is an example of one of the key activities for Habit number-two, “Begin with the End in Mind.”

This is where people do a deep reflection on their passions and purpose. An assignment was created where everyone had to share how they felt taking time to reflect and identify their purpose. There were no lurkers or multi-taskers as there are in a VILT — the learning team knew who did the work and who did not.

The screenshot shows a course page for 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' on the 3M LMS. The course outline includes:

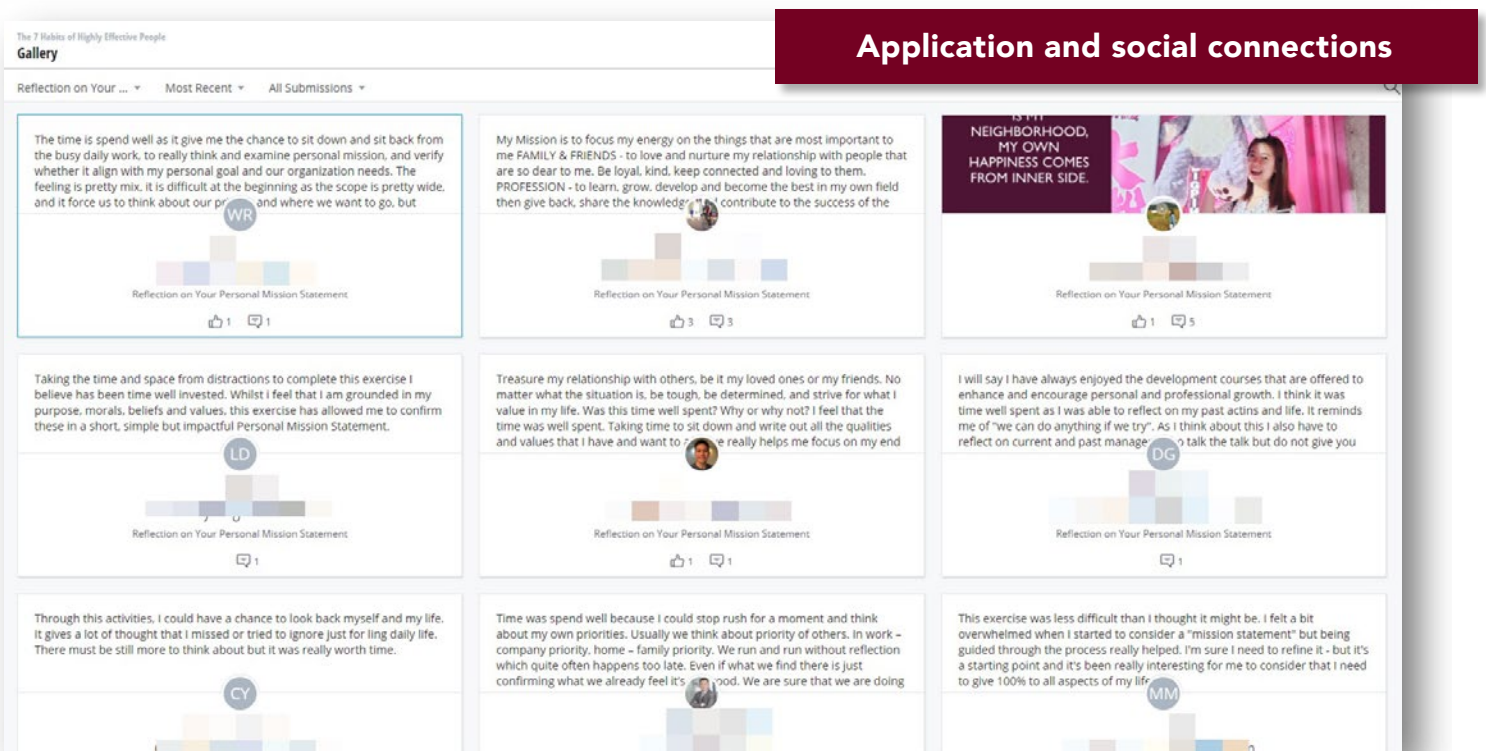
- Getting Started (20 minutes)
- Introduction (45 minutes)
- Habit 1 - Be Proactive (40 minutes)
- Habit 2 - Begin With the End in Mind (35 minutes)
- Live The 7 Habits - Week 1
- Habit 3 - Put First Things First (60 minutes)
- Habit 4 - Think Win-Win (50 minutes)
- Habit 5 - Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood (50 minutes)

The video player shows a video titled 'Habit 2 Masterpiece' with a play button and the text 'What would you create?'.

Source: 3M

Reimagining and Accelerating Leader Development at 3M: A Social Learning Success Story

NovoEd’s platform provided a gallery where learners could post their reflections in a video, text or a slide. Then, they could comment on their peers’ submissions.



“We heard and saw amazing things,” Thomas said. “On this social learning platform, learners could connect and learn from each other.”

“The doubters were becoming converted,” Thomas said. “It was amazing to see.”

Here is an example of the reactions to the social learning experience from one 3M participant.

“This is the first time I have taken this type of training. I was able to attend the training at the same time with people from different countries and learn about the similarities but also many differences. I was also able to learn more efficiently by being able to proceed at my own timing via the web. It was easy to get involved in the training because of the way we introduced ourselves at the beginning. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.”

Inside the Four Sections of the Process:

New Modalities, Greater Scope

Once we had the right content and aligned across the globe, we started to focus on scope and experiences.

Learning Content

We found vendor content that supported our business goals and had a variety of modalities and assets, and got a broad license — less restrictions meant equity across geographies.

Building a Global Learning Approach

Upskill Teams

Leadership alignment, HR alignment. Internal facilitators were trained on the new courses, and they delivered — F2F first, then Virtual.

Align Offerings Globally

Our regions and even business groups were doing different things. Global alignment created equity, strengthened the culture, and delivered learning experiences around the world.

Authors and Contributors



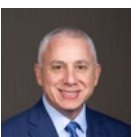
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About NovoEd



What is NovoEd ?

Founded at Stanford's Social Algorithms Lab in 2012, we empower organizations to build deep capabilities through cohort-based learning at scale.



200

ORGANIZATIONS & ENTERPRISES



11K

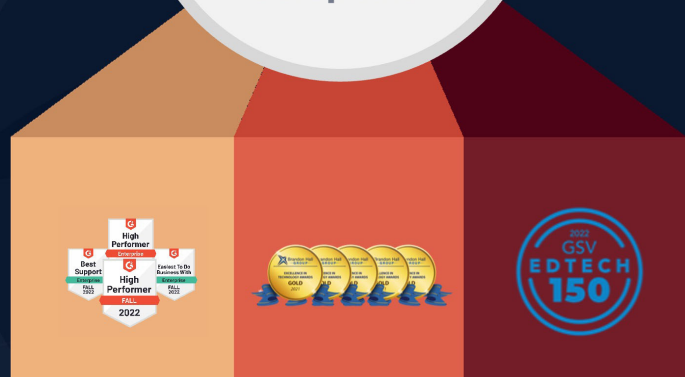
LEARNING EXPERIENCES



2.5M

UNIQUE USERS

50+
of the
world's largest
companies



Founded at Stanford's Social Algorithms Lab in 2012, NovoEd is a capability-building platform that uses social and collaborative learning to drive alignment, performance, and mobility at scale. Through cohort-based experiences, NovoEd taps into collective wisdom, placing each learner at the center of perspective, application, and expertise. Large enterprises such as 3M, GE, and Nestlé partner with NovoEd to accelerate their critical initiatives and reconnect teams through learning that is felt, experienced and swiftly transformed into impact. Visit www.novoed.com to learn more.

About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.



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are comprehensive educational programs that center around a multiphase knowledge test.