

TRAINING AS A COLLABORATIVE CONSTRUCT OF VALUE

Treinamento como uma construção colaborativa de valor

CARVALHO, Maria Margarida¹

Abstract

In a volatile, uncertain, complex, and rapidly expanding technological environment, it is essential for organizations to rethink their strategies and invest in change and innovation management. Training is value, it is a valuable collaborative construct and, nowadays, remains central in the direct impact on the evolution and growth of organizations contributing to the modernization of the country. Having in view a set of core procedures for the construction of a training plan, we tried precisely to enhance its characteristics, adapting it to prospective management principles and integrating dominant aspects. The aim was to emphasize its impact on the consolidation of a culture of knowledge based on interconnective networks of relationships, knowledge sharing and resource optimization. With solid transformational leadership and a strong value proposition defined by an ecosystem-based training plan that naturally leads to the co-creation process, organizations will more easily redefine agile strategies capable of aligning, involving, motivating, challenging, bringing together, evolving, changing their culture and stand out in the territory of competition.

Resumo

Em um ambiente tecnológico volátil, incerto, complexo e em rápida expansão, é essencial que as organizações repensem suas estratégias e invistam na gestão da mudança e da inovação. Treinamento é valor, é uma construção colaborativa valiosa e, atualmente, permanece central no impacto direto sobre a evolução e o crescimento das organizações, contribuindo para a modernização do país. Tendo em vista um conjunto de procedimentos fundamentais para a construção de um plano de treinamento, procuramos justamente aprimorar suas características, adaptando-o aos princípios da gestão prospectiva e integrando os aspectos dominantes. O objetivo era enfatizar seu impacto na consolidação de uma cultura de conhecimento baseada em redes interconectadas de relacionamentos, compartilhamento de conhecimento e otimização de recursos. Com uma sólida liderança transformacional e uma forte proposta de valor definida por um plano de treinamento baseado em ecossistema que naturalmente leva ao processo de cocriação, as organizações redefinirão mais facilmente estratégias ágeis capazes de alinhar, envolver, motivar, desafiar, reunir, evoluir, mudar sua cultura e se destacar no território da competitividade.

Keywords: *Training; Collaborative construct; Territory; Voopetition.*

Palavras-chave: *Treinamento; Construção colaborativa; Território; Coopetição.*

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¹ MARIA MARGARIDA CARVALHO – Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. PORTUGAL.
Email: mcarvalhodosreis@gmail.com

FRAMEWORK

It is obvious that organizations are currently permeable to multiple influences. Inserted in a context of varied interdependencies, organizations are equally more exposed to the volatility of challenges, making them, on the one hand, aware of their vulnerability and, on the other hand, demanding increasing levels of response and adaptability in order to consolidate its eco-sustainable positioning in a gradually more competitive market. In an economy based on knowledge, adaptability is required as a synergistic matrix demanding transformational leadership and an integrative, inclusive and homeostatic visionary capacity.

This contingency reality allows the establishment of a new model-paradigm of management in organizations. The increase in studies on the 'new' notion of service is nothing but a challenge. Its multidimensional nature grants it a prominent status, precisely because of the diversity of contexts that are gradually more intangible and interoperable. I(n)teractive and flexible ways of interacting are on demand as well as ways of being and sharing knowledge, skills and abilities, aiming at finding more intelligent, innovative and attractive solutions able to generate well-being and value (the win/win paradigm).

One of its concerns on the agenda is based on optimizing training models, expanding knowledge and qualification of professionals to innovatively develop products and services (Martinez-Cañas et al., 2016). Organizations must be able to apply their intangible assets and knowledge to generate value. Great opportunities inhabit the way leaders transform the culture of organizations and not just their strategies (Schwartz, 2018). The focus must reside on a strong learning culture under the leadership based on the sharing of knowledge. In this author's view, leaders must have the visionary ability to transform mentalities by defining new practices, training people with new skills, and involving them in new value propositions (idem). In the study carried out on transformational leaderships in higher education², Kucharska and Rebelo (2022) highlight the impact of their active role in the innovation process.

(...) the role of transformational leaders in the creation of a learning culture that enables knowledge sharing and changes the internal way of educational, scientific, and administrative processes, thus leading to the innovativeness of the entire institution visible externally. It is known that the smooth flow of knowledge processes supported by transformational leaders improves the development of intellectual capital and innovativeness (Kucharska & Rebelo, 2022, pp. 1-2).

² According to Yi, Uddin, Das, Mahmood and Sohel (2019) transformational leaders stimulate individual motivations and proactivity through the involvement of creative processes (p. 14).

Transformational leadership³ presents itself as a conceptual model of leadership whose lens focuses on the ideals of sustainable change and innovation based on principles of agility, integration, sharing of knowledge, inspiration, trust and motivation in the sense of optimization performance and, consequently, of the results to be achieved. A transformational leader is a motivator and a facilitator of guidelines, a talent mobilizer, an innovator.

Innovation stems from human capital (Kucharska & Rebelo, 2022, p.4) rooted in organizational cultures. Cultures are evolutive and complex and depend intrinsically on the attitudes, the sharing and the existing knowledge of every actor. They are therefore loaded with multiple meanings (Akaka et al., 2015). Knowledge sharing is a flow of variable intensity based on exchange in which an actor offers, for the benefit of another, his knowledge, optimizing his performance (Coun et al., 2019). This movement of exchanging and sharing knowledge is for these authors central to the emergence of innovation and creativity in workspaces where worker-actors interact, work in diverse teams and share technological tools (Coun et al., 2019. p. 482). Management changes based on the co-creation of value⁴ result from interactions that take place and materialize through multiple configurations expanding in different contexts under the lens of a visionary and integrative leadership type.

Transformational leadership encourages organizational change (Halim et al., 2020). An entity intending to be, simultaneously, competitive and innovative must change crystallized postures and incorporate the notion of error as a central pillar for the improvement of procedures, thus contributing to the reinforcement of organizational culture. Mistakes are true stimuli for improvement and attitudinal changes. They reinforce the optimization of performances and the search for improvement. Resorting to training, to knowledge sharing, to the integration of new practices, to relationships and mutually beneficial exchanges, to qualification, the assumption of the error as a value construct allows for the establishment of more tolerant, agile, flexible and stimulating entities. Transforming the error into a learning opportunity⁵ is a vital axis for an organization meant to be creative, distinctive and innovative and assume a differentiating role in the market context. Mistakes help worker-actors to adapt to change generating a collaborative

³ Concept introduced by James Burns in 1978.

⁴ Value co-creation is defined as a holistic management strategy (A4A) that mutually contributes to achieving optimized results (Martinez-Cañás et al, 2016, p.2).

⁵ Errors are meant to be a generating source of new knowledge.

spirit of mutual help throughout the organization (Kucharska & Bedford, 2020)⁶. Mistakes are real value-generating engines. The error also generates change in the individual promoting evolutive and constructive learning. The error has, therefore, a direct relation with the change of the levels of individual, social and organizational optimization.

Schwartz (2018) states that the transformation of a business depends on individual transformation⁷ adding that it is necessary for the leader to spend some time observing and understanding his own motivations, inviting them to move beyond comfort zones, both intellectually and emotionally⁸. Nowadays there's a strong need for organizational change in its *modus operandi* with impact at the level of the most conservative and reactive mentalities. Mobilizing people and teams in order to make them feel involved, aligned, focused and committed to the new multifaceted strategy based on a strong digital component (ibidem) and gradual learning are the great challenges that fall on current leadership. According to Akaka, Vargo & Schau (2015), it is crucial to raise the quality of interactions as these generate unique experiences which trigger competitive advantage, benefiting both a vast constellation of actors (Frow, Nenonen, Payne & Storbacka, 2015) and the varied geometry the dimension of innovation evokes.

Innovation results from combinatorial results of behaviours and interactions among individuals and organizations, as well as from knowledge sharing (Akaka et al, 2015). This sharing is based on an approach focused on people (actors) and on multi-part relationships (A4A)⁹ in which the ecosystem of connective networks enhance the co-creation of value¹⁰. The actor-worker, as an integrator of resources, generates evolutive dynamics of plural learning (Huotari-Koskela & Siltaloppi, 2020). This way new knowledge and skills are gained, opening the field of training as one of the vital segments for change, for innovation and competitiveness. Actors performing functions within an organization whose culture is based on learning, emerge as participants or creators in the

⁶ “What characterizes collaborative culture are shared values and beliefs regarding open communication, encouragement of respect, teamwork, adaptability, risk taking and diversity (...), in an appropriate climate for knowledge dissemination reflected in interactions and communications that foster employees' learning” (p .6).

⁷ Schwartz (2018) “the result is that a business also depends on transforming individuals”.

⁸ Idem.

⁹ This designation is typified in the article by Polese, Pels, Tronvoll & Bruni (2017).

¹⁰ Under this paradigm organizations are seen as entities that see customers as human beings endowed with intelligence, heart, soul and spirit who long for living with ethical values, such as cooperation, friendship and human well-being. (Martinez-Cañas et al., 2016, p. 13).

construction of value (Alves et al., 2016) as they have a predisposition to learn. They are dynamic, influencers, motivators, integrators and are prepared to accept mistakes in a positive and constructive way. “There is no learning culture without a knowledge culture” (Kucharska & Rebelo, 2022, p. 5).

Knowledge is an intangible value. Innovating services through a structuring bet on qualified and certified training is the motto launched to promote differentiation, diversification, ensuring a service offer in line with the ambitions of organizations. Innovating implies the adoption of strategic policies and the constitution of expansive networks of actors that facilitate the promotion and configuration of entrepreneurial and creative constellations with reciprocity of benefits. In the knowledge society inhabited by organizations there is a strong need for a gradual investment in human capital. Professional-actors appear precisely as the diamond of organizations decisive for their success.

Based on all this, in short, we present, in a figurative way, the model we believe to be the most suitable for our line of thought:

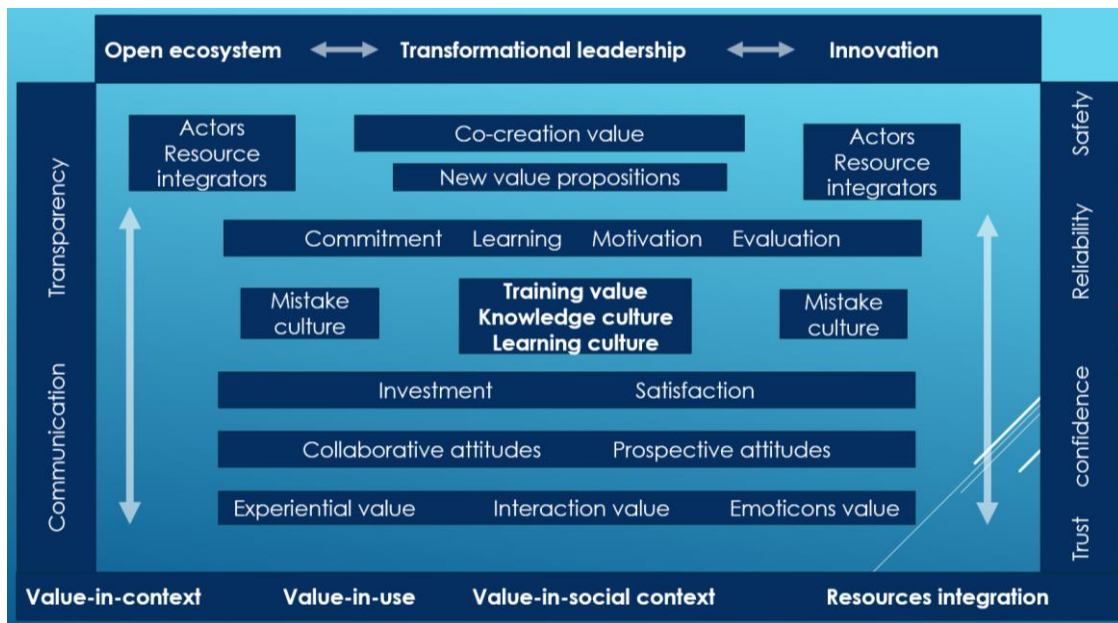


Fig. 1- Culture of knowledge-training (own authorship).

The commitment to continuous learning¹¹, to the sharing of knowledge, to the increase of dynamic and evolving qualifications is therefore core vector that allows the design of the best management practices to capture and enhance value.

¹¹ It integrates different training models and types.

(...) dynamic capabilities are seen as processes that address the evolutive nature of resources in a changing environment and explicitly link organizational resources and the external environment with the purpose of creating sustainable competitive advantage for the enterprise by reconfiguring a critical set of resources (Harsch & Festing, 2020, p. 45).

The construction of best practices under the aegis of professional training and the acquisition of new skills and knowledge is based on a new paradigm that enables organizations to renew and quickly readapt to new challenges. This way they respond to disruptive transformations of the contexts in which they operate, exploring value opportunities and concomitantly reinforcing the organizational culture, identity, image, and attracting new talent. They also give substantive meaning to experiences, insights, attitudes, and positive motivation and sense of well-being.

Investment in learning broadens the axis of economic growth and highlights areas permeable to the emergence of territories of innovation and creativity. The focus is on the ability of organizations to manage their talents and capabilities in a dynamic, agile and constructive way. The key lies in the evolving knowledge of its human resources, attracting and retaining them through new training offers and new work networks (Harsch & Festing, 2020). Following this line of thought, we present the core aspects considered to be essential in the proposal to draw a strategic training map:



Fig 2 - Strategic Training Map (own elaboration)

The four dimensions, namely: i) innovation-learning-knowledge, ii) financial, iii) processes and iv) actors-collaborators, represent the core components entering the value proposition equation. Upstream the growing chain, one must scalp the differentiating elements that determine reflection by dimension. The reflexive bottom-up movement presents us with greater clarity in determining the major strategic objectives, such as: i)

granting quality and sustainability; ii) ensuring the efficiency of procedures; iii) reinforce the network of actors and partnerships; iv) reinforce competitiveness under the aegis of good practices and the umbrella of change management. The great mobilizing engine, however, are the people and training (learning), the axis that crosses, empowers and renews the different dimensions.

In the wake of Huotari-Koskela and Siltaloppi's (2020)¹², people are not mere passive subjects. They are actors, integrators of resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2011) who continuously and gradually transform themselves and in this movement determine the effectiveness of the dynamic process of value co-creation. Integration of resources is a 'core practice' of the value co-creation dimension. According to Huotari-Koskela and Vargo (2015, p.172) "its operationalization assumes the recognition of '*resourceness*' of the potential resources available to them". To centre and focus in order to expand and evolve. This means that self-awareness of one's value and one's resources is an essential condition for the success of the corresponding integration and co-creation of value. "The goal is to explore the phenomenological, subjective intra and intersubjective side of oneself to expand the dimension of creativity to integrate, collaborate and collaboratively generate value" (Huotari-Koskela & Siltaloppi, 2020, p. 441) as if it was a cosmic breath. It gets inspiration by integrating and sharing and becomes real by exhaling the constellar areas of innovation and creativity.

Training and knowledge as a value construct

"Knowledge is considered as a basic resource for value creation (...). Knowledge is the main factor in today's economic environment" (Marcin, 2013, p. 289).

In the current economic and social context, professional training emerges as a dynamic construct of lifelong learning, a stimulator that intensifies the activity of active citizenship, boosting the country's progress. Although there are different levels of training, one should never stop stressing that the equation that sustains the relationship - the greater the acquisition and updating of knowledge, the greater the impact on the development of results - determines a unique opportunity for growth of organizations¹³

¹² "Humans as actors are in a constant state of becoming" (p. 449).

¹³ Vasconcelos, C. (Dec 5, 2020). The importance of Professional Training in personal and career development. <https://campusdigital.pt/importancia-formacao-profissional-no-desenvolvimento-pessoal-na-carreira>

positioning them in an expansive and differentiating territory in terms of competitiveness and globalization. The magnification of this lens sets a paradigm centred on the agility of organizations enabling their positioning in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous territory (VUCA)¹⁴. Productivity and profitability will be greatly valued as well as quality and personal, professional and social well-being¹⁵ through the focus on relationships, on dynamic and evolving interactions as well as knowledge sharing¹⁶. Awareness of the existence of VUCA calls, precisely, for a reconfiguration of management models with a focus on a more visionary, integrated and holistic position in convergence with a more agile, flexible, comprehensive and transparent posture.

Professional training develops human intellectual capital and promotes organizational intelligence expanding the umbrella of creativity, critical thinking and innovation. Investing in training represents *per se* a guarantee of qualification, proficiency, productivity on the level of employability, personal and professional fulfilment, emerging as a determining factor for the success of organizations. The knowledge-based economy strategically confers a synergistic bet on the learning and training of its workers-actors.

“According to such a way of new economic thinking, nowadays knowledge is considered as the most important and productive factor of production” (Marcin, 2013, p. 290).

The emerging paradigm will allow not only to mobilize and allocate resources in a proficient manner, but also to stimulate and encourage the creation, use and dissemination of knowledge (Marcin, 2013). For organizations investment in intellectual capital will revert, mutually and favourably, to themselves and simultaneously to the country. Training is therefore presented as an engine of development as a stimulator of potentialities and opportunities. Training, in this perspective, is a factor of innovation and knowledge creation (ibidem). Knowledge is an intangible value that allows combining and reconfiguring differentiated and synergetic approaches. People are social actors with knowledge and skills that can be used for self-benefit and for the benefit of other actors (Tronvoll, 2017).

Reis, C. (Feb 9, 2022). Vocational Training: its importance for the labour market.

<https://www.e-konomista.pt/formacao9-profissional/>

¹⁴ Acronym used to describe the surrounding environment that pushes entities towards change: Volatile, Uncertainty, Complex, Ambiguous.

¹⁵ The importance of people's happiness in the organization.

¹⁶ Reis, C. (2022).

Training is a process that allows catalysing talents making ways of thinking more flexible, providing new experiences of reflexive questioning¹⁷, improving decision-making, consolidate confidence and clairvoyance. Training is therefore value. As value its nature is multidimensional (Khalifa, 2004; Kumar & Rahman, 2015). The dimension of value appears to be intrinsic to the very concept of training and knowledge acquisition as it requires, in the perspective of the organization-entity, an investment and simultaneously a volitional and innovative action of differentiation. Qualifying is valuing. In the view of the citizen and the gains in knowledge, skills and new postures, professional training presents itself as a congregator, mobilizer and stimulator of changes. It is a strategic instrument of modernization and evolution of economic growth. It is an opportunity for personal and social development and appreciation. In the wake of Koskela-Huotari and Vargo's (2016) thinking, these authors stress the importance for institutions¹⁸ to examine their positioning and the way they operate in a complex, multidimensional and dynamic territory-context to promote transformations and creations of value through actor-integrators of resources because,

(...) context emerges in constellations of resources as actors connect with one another and is, therefore, unique to specify exchanges and continually evolving. (...) the way resources are integrated and value is co-created in service ecosystem (Koskela-Huotari & Vargo, 2016, p. 164).

In an open economy and in a global and dynamics market, characterized by a transformational matrix, sustained by new models of interaction, socialization, active communication and varied responsibilities, new forms of work organization and actions|synergistic solutions are sought to enhance a sustained change in new qualifications through the transformation-training engine, redesigning more attractive remuneration conditions, generating greater satisfaction and well-being. Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2016) named them resources¹⁹ used in practices²⁰, thus highlighting knowledge

¹⁷ Critical thinking was considered the second most relevant competence in the report published by the World Economic Forum "the future of work".

¹⁸The concept of institution should not be confused with organization. "Institutions represent the 'rules of the game' that guide how resources are integrated in service ecosystems and provide the context in which resource 'become' (Kostela-Huotari & Vargo, 2016, p. 164). "Institutions are humanly devised schemas, norms and regulations that enable and constrain the behaviour of social actors and make social life predictable and meaningful" (Kostela-Huotari & Vargo, 2016, p. 169).

¹⁹ Operant resources and operated resources. (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016).

²⁰ A practice is a type of routine behaviour, it is a set of actions consisting of the use of elements interconnected with one another. (Tronvoll, 2017, p.7) "practices enable actors to coordinate their intentions, meanings, actions, and behaviours and explain how value and markets are co-created, integrated, and exchanged. In addition, practices assimilate communication and the interpretation of symbols and signs, which creates guidelines for normalizing practices and integrating different sets of resources to co-create value".

and skills (operating resources) in obtaining better results. Resource integration gains its ontology “becoming”²¹. In the perspective of Vargo & Akaka (2012), the integration of resources is the basis of co-creation of value and allows the generation of multiple dimensions.

Actors co-create value based on their individual perceptions and links to other actors through their network as well as through the embedded service ecosystems” (Tronvoll, 2017, p.2). From a practical viewpoint, this study suggests that managers should consider increasing firm interactions with customers before, during and after product purchases. This may not only enhance customer experiences and product satisfaction, but also stimulate innovativeness (Zaborek & Makur, 2017, p.101).

Value is generated collaboratively by multiple actors who interconnect through successive exchanges, integrating and applying resources (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Kostela-Huotari & Vargo, 2016, p. 163; Huotari-Koskela & Siltaloppi, 2020) occurring in context, through the application or use of other resources for the benefit of everyone involved. Interacting, communicating, listening, questioning, reflecting, analysing, organizing and evaluating are mental procedures that allow to open the structuring system of critical and creative thinking and actively collaborate in making the best decisions, promoting innovations and networks of potential benefits. According to Garmann-Johnsen & Eikebrokk (2021, pp. 190-191), “ecosystems and co-creation networks can increase competitive power by encouraging organizations to rethink their business models, processes, spaces and structures”.

Workspaces are considered vital for an organizational change and for the expansion of the value co-creation network. Maione, Torre, Troisi and Carrubo (2016) believe in co-working spaces. These spaces, according to those authors, are places that enhance the sharing of resources and multidisciplinary approaches, helping actors to evolve, as the activities developed can influence the quality of work as well as the networks of relationships. Co-working is a *locus* of gestations. Still under this co-working umbrella, those academics subscribe to these spaces as true stimulators of learning factors, peer cooperation and the emergence of new projects. Co-working is an enhancer and generator of value, in a collaborative way. Appealing to its constitution, and also, within the scope of co-creation of value, it is necessary to organize and encourage continuous training structures within an organization making use of the potential of each individual – actor, aligning with the organization's strategy.

²¹ “Resources are not. They become” (Vargo & Lusch 2004, p.2; 2016) Operant resources are intangible and have dynamic functions such as skills and knowledge that are dynamic and evolving.

How to design and activate a training plan in your organization

“Organisations and societies around the world increasingly depend on innovation and knowledge creation to address emerging challenges giving urgency to innovation and creative thinking as collective enterprises.”²² (OECD, 2022).

A training plan is a value proposition capable of accompanying and operating (a)/ in change, ensuring proficiency and adapting to changing needs and challenges. A training plan is a guarantee of quality and sustainability. It guarantees efficiency, optimizing and simplifying procedures, strengthens and expands the network of actors and fertilizes the territory for innovation and competitiveness. Training enables the development of good practices opening the horizon for change management. In terms of innovation and learning professional training improves organizational culture, strengthens qualifications, optimizes digital technology and promotes creativity. On the other hand by optimizing processes and procedures, it focuses on digital and leverages interoperability among systems rationalizing resources and reducing costs.

Training is an axis that gathers talents and changes. It retains and captures talent, anticipates needs, motivates, generates well-being and optimizes cooperative work. It is a territory that leverages social practices. It allows the strengthening of relationship networks, the optimization processes and procedures, the improvement of all parts' communication and consolidates self-identity, renewing the organization's culture. Training is a repository of feasibility that empowers the areas of productivity, motivation, inter and intra entrepreneurship, critical thinking, innovation and creativity. It is an engine of growth in its multiple aspects and allows you to achieve success. Training allows the transfer of knowledge, the transformation of culture and the opening to creativity.

The construction of a training plan is above all a collaborative instrument. It requires upstream deep knowledge of the existing human resources as well as the functions that each individual performs within the organization. It also requires an immersive analysis of the entity's constitution, a clear mastery of its mission and objectives as well as in a holistic way, a strict determination of its strategic alignment.

²² OECD (2022). <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/innovation/creative-thinking/>
OECD (2021). Pisa 2021 creative thinking framework (third Draft). Access on November, 8th 2022 in <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA-2021-creative-thinking-framework.pdf> .

This way, the chain of core valences for the design of a training plan lies in the areas that follow: i) listening to needs; ii) collaborative design of the plan; iii) training management processes; iv) performance improvement; v) commitment to building collaborative value with quality (ck. fig. below).

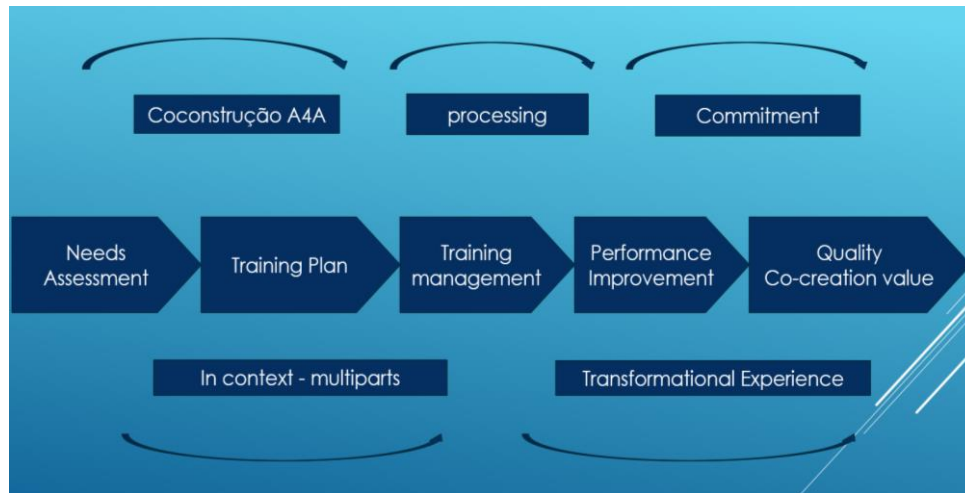


Fig. 3 - Follow ups for building a training plan (own elaboration)

To carry out an immersion in the vast organizational ocean, one can think of an analysis-diagnosis using, for example, the SWOT. This tool allows us to have a clear view of the strong or weak points (internal environment) and opportunities and threats (external environment). The big challenge lies in the possible conversion of threats into opportunities transforming detected weaknesses into strong and decisive areas. Such a transformational movement requires involvement, interaction, congregation and the exploration of practices such as brainstorming, focus groups and more specific meetings to scalpel and define strategic priorities. It enables a need's assessment in a rigorous and systematic way in order to carry out a detailed and refined analysis of existing talent. On the other hand it allows to know the needs of the markets and corresponding actors to characterize the path to be taken and objectives to be achieved (Decree Law 86-A/2016, 29th December). Having full knowledge of itself as an organization and of the surrounding contexts in which it operates and interacts (actors) becomes imperative for organizational systems intending to evolve and distinguish themselves in the axes of good practices, modernization and innovation.

Based on an economic and social context of undoubted relevance, professional training is a process that aims at increasing qualification and reinforcing skills in professional practice. Professional training is applicable to the universe enshrined in Portuguese Law no. 35/2014, June 20th, amended by Laws no. 82-B/2014, December

31st, 84/2015, August 7th, and 18/2016, June 20th. The juridical-legal corpus in force²³ gives it grounds and constitutes a guarantee regarding the increase of aptitudes, competences and knowledge of workers-actors and also regarding their better job market insertion. Professional training is a strategic tool for modernization and allows the increase and intensification of the areas of quality, creativity and proficiency.

A training plan is therefore a structuring, systemic, extensive, collaborative document whose matrix underpins a set of requirements. Having promotion, appreciation and personal and professional development of the actors-workers as a reference, a training plan tries to promote and consolidate good practices of a service focused on the citizen/customer ensuring the motivation of the teams to improve performance and, consequently, increase the feeling of well-being, belonging and identity. In this ecosystem of interactions, it is essential for the governance of organizations to be actively committed to provide co-builders with essential resources in the wake of good practices.

Apart from the initial radar, it is necessary for the design of the plan to reflect and respond to five core questions, namely: i) Why? (what reasons account for its design); ii) What? (what is intended with the training plan); iii) When? (what is the best period for its implementation); iv) How? (how are we going to put it into practice); v) For whom? (at whom it is aimed). These questions allow to understand and move, in a systemic way, towards an eco-sustainable model-paradigm A4A²⁴ able to respond both to basic and innovational needs of the organization, leveraging the mastery of technologies for greater modernization, efficiency and satisfaction. Getting knowledge out of the profitable use of technologies is an imperative that in the 21st century is called digital literacy. It shows up as a transversal competence capable of generating value in organizations.

Although digital transformation is focused on firm-centric changes and improvements, we argue that service transformation aims for a more holistic perspective that contributes not only to the firm but also to customers, employees, and all other stakeholders of the firm. Service transformation can be considered as a strategic mindset towards an aspirational goal to take the firm to the next level of performance to improve its market position” (Kandampully et al, 2021, p.220).

²³ See the effect on public service enshrined in law no. 82/2019 of September 2 which binds commitment and responsibility together in training.

²⁴ The A4A paradigm typified in the service ecosystems perspective model places its centrality or focus on the constellation of relationships, experiences, emotions, integrating a collaborative strategy for the co-creation of value of a multidimensional nature.

There are three core principles that guide and underlie the genesis of the design of a training plan, whose nature is composed by the active collaboration of its constituent parts:

- i) Safeguarding equal opportunities for the access to attend the courses;
- ii) The real diagnosis of training needs and consequent prioritization under the aegis of a culture of quality targeting results and competences;
- iii) The construction of a prospective approach to training actions in articulation with the challenges of Strategic Plans.

Management of a training plan: steps to consider

Needs assessment is a methodological process of gathering and analysing information. It determines the existing gap between what is expected of an actor-worker when doing his job and what, in reality, he can offer in exchange for the gains in knowledge, skills and accumulated experience.

Wealth within organizations is unparalleled. This maxim is not just a mere expression of an accounting reality, but a realisation about the intangible value and the precious role of people, of professionals, in a given organization.

The listening phase of the needs is a transformational territory. It assumes an interactive dynamic among the parties involved, active proximity and listening, transparent tolerance. It is a phase of true sharing and collaboration of urgent needs and a call for constructive participation. Dialogue, a process part of the listening phase, is a constructive conversation seeking scalable solutions. It is a transforming reality as well based on an open attitude guided by active listening. It engages from the centrality of the individual to create structuring stimuli for the acquisition of value. The feedback works as core ingredients for the sustainability of a training plan appealing to co-responsibility both in the designing phase and in the implementation phase. Involving, listening, welcoming, integrating, sharing, interacting, communicating are procedural concepts that can be used to map out, in a transparent way, the initial territory of the training plan.

After collecting information resulting from the diagnosis, the respective training areas are crossed to prioritize as far as strategic alignment is concerned.

The management of the training plan, a subsequent phase to the consultation-diagnosis of needs, will thus integrate a set of stages which will deserve particular attention given the multiplicity and density of the actions to be developed. It will require a mutual bond and commitment, an evolutive proximity, a continuous and dynamic monitoring. The plan as an open document, training management is a basilar procedure for determining its implementation and for reconfiguration of new items, new approaches or possible changes.

Down the chain, commitment issues regarding the objectives to be achieved, monitoring and daily experiential practices as well as real impact, are notes that generate improvement exercises. All actors are committed to accompanying the training process particularly on-going and ex-post phases for later tuning contents, teaching methods, detection of possible mismatches guided by the strategic mission and ambition.

The third phase refers to the implementation of the training plan. Upstream the internal strategy of communication and dissemination of actions (in an appealing and effective way), the corresponding authorizations for attendance, the training schedule and the physical and/or virtual conditions for their implementation must be safeguarded as well as the contract with the training entity and respective trainer.

After this formalization, a structuring and systemic analysis of the training as a whole is carried out. Learning (*ex-ante*; *on going*; *ex-post*), training content, degrees of satisfaction and achieved goals are assessed.

This phase generates a new challenge arising from the follow-up phase known as *ex-post*. According to its relevance a fruitful commitment is achieved and simultaneously greater caution among the parties involved (professionals and managers). Proximity between actors-leaders and actors-professionals in verifying the applicability of the new knowledge and skills acquired and in gauging their success is mandatory. At this stage new training strategies are designed and new training is adjusted and reformulated. It is the debugging phase where achieved alignments and goals in each service meet together. Regarding previous investment mutual benefit under innovation and service quality is important.

Following the procedures from above the process of information gathering and analysis of real needs begins setting up its articulation with the expected objective. Select and align strategic objectives and prioritize after satisfaction surveys (check up). The step that follows, planning the courses, their goals, duration (expected hours), target group, location and necessary resources. At this stage learning objectives, type of training,

organization, class load, methodologies, evaluation criteria, teaching resources, the spaces and equipment should all be planned. The allocation of funds to move to the budgeting phase allows for a cost-benefit analysis and capture of revenue. We then proceed to its implementation phase with prospective *on going* actions. A training plan is a document resulting from the gathering of countless contributions and for that reason it is an open, dynamic and evolutive tool that must mirror a real assumption and analysis of its efficiency by assessing the impacts, analysing and comparing results, verifying the *ex-post*. It should integrate the dimensions of self and hetero evaluation, develop the measurement of the effectiveness of training sessions.

As a co-constructive matrix aligned with the organization's strategic mission, the design of a training plan includes a set of differentiated stages. Firstly, a study on the multiple offers (requirements) on the market in terms of areas lacking in training and in terms of training modes is recommended: i) in-person ii) e-learning, iii) b-learning. To structure the coding of the areas covered, the objectives and the length of actions one can refer to the Portuguese National Qualifications Catalog (NQC)²⁵ available online, making further procedures easier. For more specific areas one should consult partners, active actors that provide with the consolidation of training and leverage new professionalism.

According to Education System Basic Portuguese Law (Law 46/86, October 14, article 19), professional training qualifies professionals through the acquisition of new knowledge and skills anticipating the most appropriate responses to real needs integrating technological development.

Seen in these terms, the framework of professional training for human capital valorisation points to the existence of three different modalities regarding the professional's level of knowledge at the time of its design, such as: i) initial training; ii) continuous training; iii) training for professional appreciation (Portuguese Decree Law No. 86-A/2016). To make it clearer, and under the new regulatory framework, we can say that i) initial training becomes obligatory for the ones taking up the post ii) lifelong training presenting three different types of learning: a) formal; b) non formal; c) informal, seeking to develop and update knowledge, skills and attitudes; iii) training for professional appreciation aims at strengthening professional skills arising from the reorganization of organisms or service (*idem*).

²⁵ CNQ regulates the training offer and guides its references.

As for typology and still within the scope of the Portuguese legislation from above training courses can be i) short-length (up to 30 hours), ii) average-length (over 30 and up to 60 hours) and iii) long-length (over 60 hours), being able to be attended in i) classroom based sessions, ii) work-related training, iii) distance training, iv) virtual training.

In short, we present the conceptual framework of the exposed above:

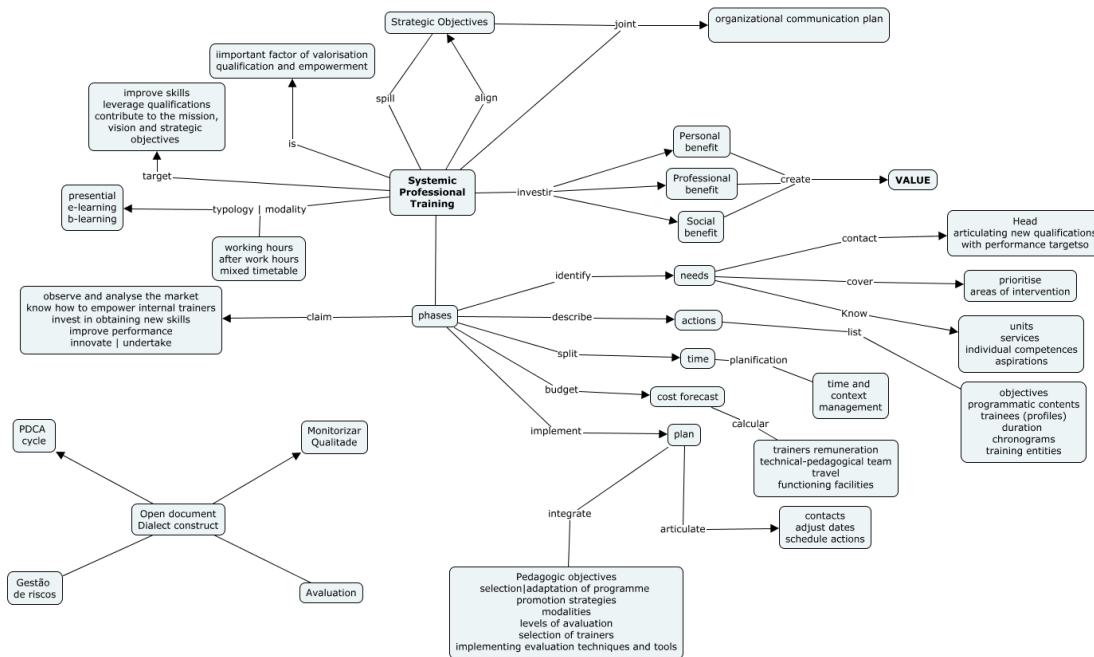


Fig. 4- Conceptual framework of the constellations that make up the training (own elaboration)

A plan intended to be systemic

The training plan is a systemic, dynamic and evolutive management tool. Its design as a value proposition assumes a vision focused on valuing people and their lifelong learning construct in the area of digital skills and practices resulting from the applicability of acquired knowledge.

This way investment in the quality of training must be based on seven assumptions interdependent and complementary which will determine consolidation by a clear vision of the need to anticipate and recontextualize risks and opportunities. To design a training plan it is decisive to take the entity's strategic needs into account and integrate the following actions:

- i. Reformulation of existing training strategies
- ii. Diversification of training offers
- iii. Maximization of personal and professional achievement (employer branding and learnability and lifelong learning)
- iv. Expansion of qualification (upskilling, reskilling) and continuous improvement
- v. Fostering a culture of optimizing results vs. skills
- vi. Reinforcement of culture and good practices
- vii. Maximization of organizational reputation and positioning

Having as reference the increase of this procedural corpus, it is also essential for its structuring points to consider:

- i) a value proposal based both on the promotion of a culture focused on valuing people and on the axis of lifelong learning.
- ii) the promotion, training and attraction|retention of new talent.
- iii) the development, revitalization and diversification of a training offer based on a radial, interconnective and referential system.
- iv) the optimization of the quality of service provision and improvement of processes
- v) the efficiency and well-being synergies
- vi) the digital ecology
- vii) the reinforcement and expansion of the network of actors and partners
- viii) the value co-creation paradigm

The promotion of a new work culture towards proficiency and well-being, the design of a new commitment model aimed at personal and professional fulfilment through increased qualifications (learnability). Refocus training concept. The sharing of knowledge, the flexibility of tasks and procedures, responsibility, guidance towards a new paradigm of service, more open, versatile, more permeable and adaptable to interinfluences and more eco-co-constructive.

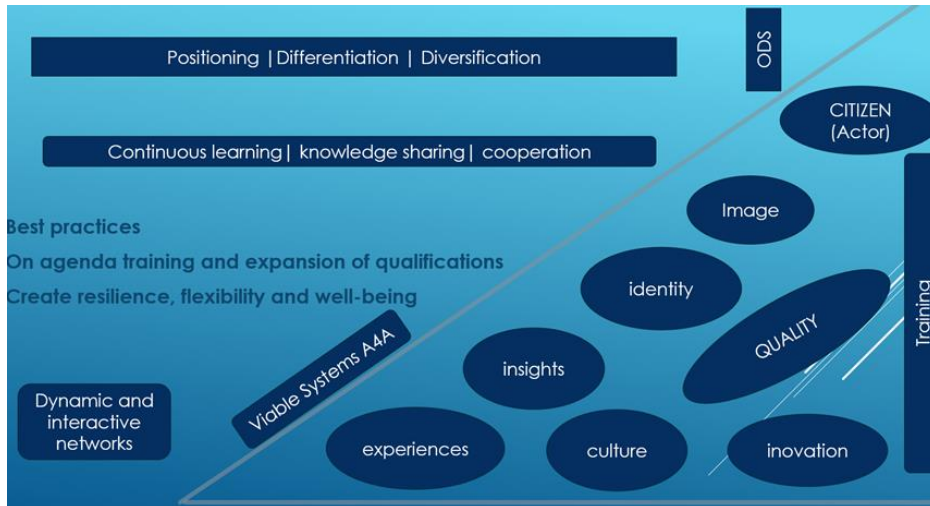


Fig. 5 – Training and axes of differentiation and diversification (own elaboration)

Training, in our perspective, will therefore be seen as one of the strategic segments capable of uniting and cementing human capital - organizational diamond - and simultaneously take root for the growth of motivation, happiness and everyone’s well-being. If human component is fulfilled and motivated the participation in decision-making and the emergence of new value propositions will naturally take place. Knowledge sharing on a collaborative innovation basis in order to maximize value for the benefit of the actors involved will also be a consequence. Training leverages proactive ways of being and opening up a range of possibilities where happiness and welfare emerge as the ultimate exponent of personal, professional and organizational fulfilment (ck. image below).

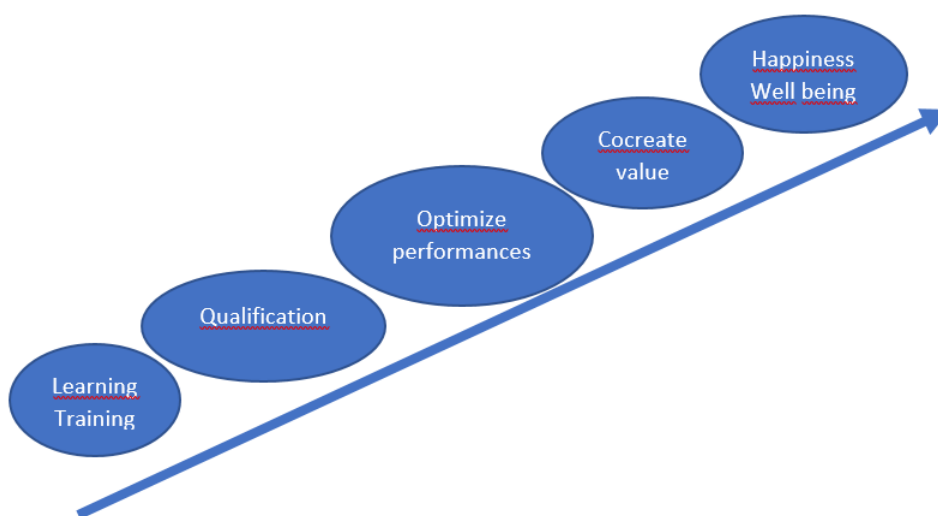


Fig. 6 - Achievement vs. satisfaction (own elaboration)

The importance of partnership networks in the success of the design of the training plan

Business organizations collaborate with partners and quite often form collaborative networks in order to acquire information, knowledge, competencies and resources that exist out of their boundaries. (...) In general, businesses participate in collaborative networks and collaborate with others in order to serve better their goals or pursue mutual benefits and common goals (Fragidis, 2021, p. 343).

Training is a catalyst and promoter of new talent. It is a multiplier of new learning. Providing professionals with a set of knowledge and skills that both qualify the exercise of their functions and raise levels of efficiency, effectiveness and quality is the goal that guides the commitment to a proposal for a Training Plan. Sharing knowledge as well as the learning among organisations/entities can mean undertaking an attitude of openness regarding the background and the need to form interconnective networks linked to an agile, flexible, adaptable and sustainable way in the axis of competitiveness and innovation incorporating mutual benefits. “New technologies boost new methodologies, new value proposition models, making it possible for organizational systems to “interact in real-time regardless of geographic location, synchronously as well as asynchronously overcoming the limitations of traditional modes of communication” (Sashi, 2020, p. 1644). This author points out new paths which include the use of new technologies in general, digital communication and interconnective collaborative networks, especially the ones resulting from multidimensionality of relationships, opening up the axis of co-creation of value.

The contemporary perspective on the value co-creation process indicates that value results from an active and evolving collaboration, involves a great number of actors who build networks of relationships through the integration of resources (Jaakkola & Hakanen, 2013), multiplies dialogues, expedites procedures and accelerates decision-making. Based on connections with other actors, each individual occupies a different position in the network that describes his portfolio of relationships (Fragidis, 2021). A network is a web of varied constellations, an expansive, open ecosystem that inter and intra influence one another. Consisting of several entities, the collaborative spirit makes the co-creation of value flourish (Mastio, 2019, p. 19). Its scope is holistic and its impact challenging.

By connecting and interacting with one another they attempt to understand the nature of the problem, determine alternate courses of action and find an innovative solution (Sashi, 2020, p. 1650).

Encouraging and motivating the exercise of good practices, optimizing performance through the setting of connective networks and partnerships in which the central ingredient rests on the notion of trust and commitment (idem, p.1650) enables the dynamic construction of acquisition of new knowledge and competences as a synergistic reference promoter of value.

Partnerships are a strategic method of growth for organizations. They are a managerial spur to add value. They are multidisciplinary synergistic impulses. They allow the collaborative creation of “business” opportunities of an organization. Partnerships carry a number of benefits, allow the expansion of the network of actors, promote dialogue and proximity, strengthen trust, empower quality, and boost innovation and competitiveness.

Partnerships broaden qualifications and make resources and human capital profitable. Besides they expand knowledge network. Collaborative networks engage their members in sharing resources, competencies and responsibilities in order to attain advanced results or common goals (Fragidis, 2021).

In short partnerships are engines that facilitate and enhance the co-creation of value and enable the reinforcement of the organizational identity through the construction of open, permeable, renewable and self-sustaining systems. Resorting to a wide network of actors - partners and partnerships that add to the consolidation and optimization of a strategic training plan - expedites the consolidation of an emerging and innovative organization. Briefly, we present the idea of training ecosystem construct within an expanding and integrative paradigm based on networks and partnerships:

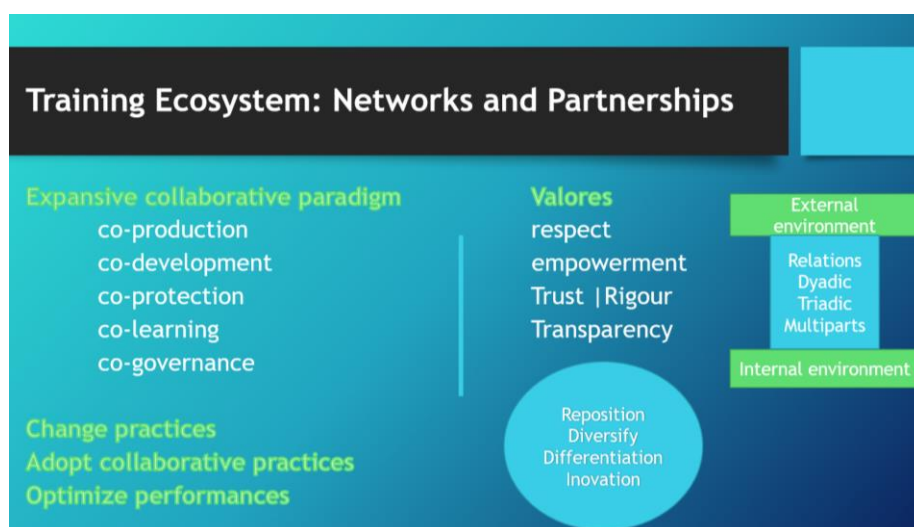


Fig. 7 – Networks and partnerships as collaborative value constructs.

A plan must be designed prospectively with an ecosystemic vision of the future and responsible for the expected results. The training axis is, in short, a diamond segment in terms of cooperation. It is a value construct that raises the ambition of organizations and of every professional-actor involved in A4A. The larger the network of actors and partners, the greater the success in the investment in training areas, benefiting the entity itself, the organization and the country.

CONCLUSION

In a global world and of uncertainties, the creation of connective networks supported by a communication and training plan strengthens the notion of proximity, interaction, adaptability, agility and corresponding human potential.

With this reflection we tried to enhance the strategy adopted in the design of a training plan. Giving training the central role, involving all actors to participate in a common design of an evolutive and integrative value proposal for better applicability of good practices and foundation of innovation, was the challenge we aimed to explore. The reference matrix advocates anticipating value propositions, turning gaps and omissions into new opportunities in order to expand levels of training and capitalization of human potential and this way reinforce and consolidate dimensions of personal fulfilment, social, economic, political and cultural responsibility.

A training system is, that way, a strong instrument of development and change. It assumes an inestimable value both for the individual himself when playing his many roles and for society as generator of happiness and well-being, linking individual and collective responsibilities. To expand the network of actors towards growth, positioning and innovation.

When in agreement and aligned with the mission and strategies of the organization in a culture centred on knowledge involving dynamic relationships, the training system accounts for greater commitment, involvement and engagement of the actors (A4A). It also gives rise to an environment of mutual responsibilities regarding authenticity, legitimacy and skills needed.

The challenge lies in designing an extensive plan and simultaneously multiplicative challenges when facing volatility of the surrounding contexts, based on the continuous learning segment. One requires a training system able to promote new ways of work follow-ups, feedback, permanent monitoring. In short permanent interactive constructs leading to innovation and social well-being. It is suggested, for greater effectiveness, to transform workplaces investing on co-working spaces. However, for renewal to happen, the existence of transformational leadership must be real.

Consolidating plural learning systems capable of keeping up with changes and demand trends, launching new value propositions, cooperating with different actors through networks and partnerships are the purposes that support the commitment and creation of a training plan as a source of co-creation of value.

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