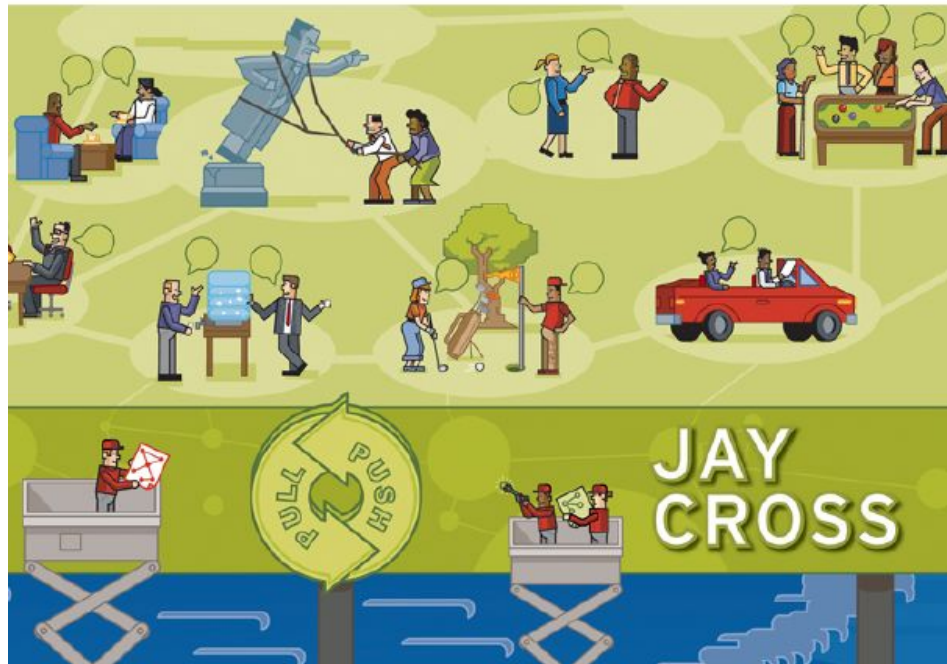


informal learning

Rediscovering the Natural Pathways That Inspire
INNOVATION and **PERFORMANCE**



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INTRODUCTION

WORKERS LEARN MORE in the coffee room than in the classroom. They discover how to do their jobs through informal learning: asking the person in the next cubicle, trial and error, calling the help desk, working with people in the know, and joining the conversation. This is natural learning-learning from others when you feel the need to do so.

Training programs, workshops, and schools get the lion's share of the corporate budget for developing talent, despite the fact that this formal learning has almost no impact on job performance. And informal learning, the major source of knowledge transfer and innovation, is left to chance.

This book aims to raise your consciousness about informal teaming. You will discover that informal learning is a profit strategy, that it flexes with change, and that it respects and challenges workers. You will see how hard-nosed businesses use organizational network analysis, conversation space, and communities of purpose to fuel innovation and agility. You will read stories of dozens of companies that have prospered by putting informal teaming techniques to work.

Learning is that which enables you to participate successfully in life, at work, and in the groups that matter to you.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

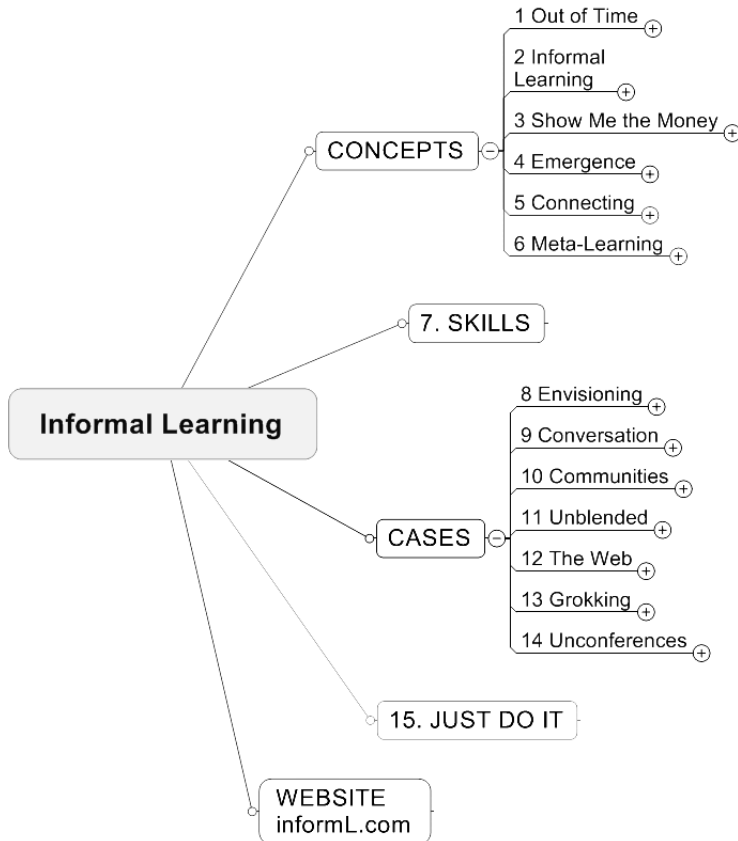
This book is first and foremost for decision makers. Informal teaming is neither the training department's job nor a human resource function. Nurturing informal teaming is an implicit part of every manager's job.

This book is for executives who know in their hearts that their organization's approaches are not sufficient to prepare their workers for the future. It is also for knowledge workers who are taking charge of their own learning.

Learning is like breathing, so much a part of our lives that we're unaware of it until a mentor or a book refocuses our attention. When you know what to look for, you can leverage it to your advantage.

Chief learning officers and training managers also will read this book because it proposes a framework for teaming that is more spontaneous, cost-effective, and enjoyable than what has come before.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK



The companion Web site at <http://informl.com> provides new developments, additional examples, and a community of interest.

Since we're going to focus on informal learning, we will not be dealing with compliance training or certification programs. They are more tenure than training. Four out of five companies that follow are American; your culture may vary. Finally, this book does not address schooling or how children learn.

Let's begin.