

# Social learning

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The key to unlocking 70:20:10



March 2016

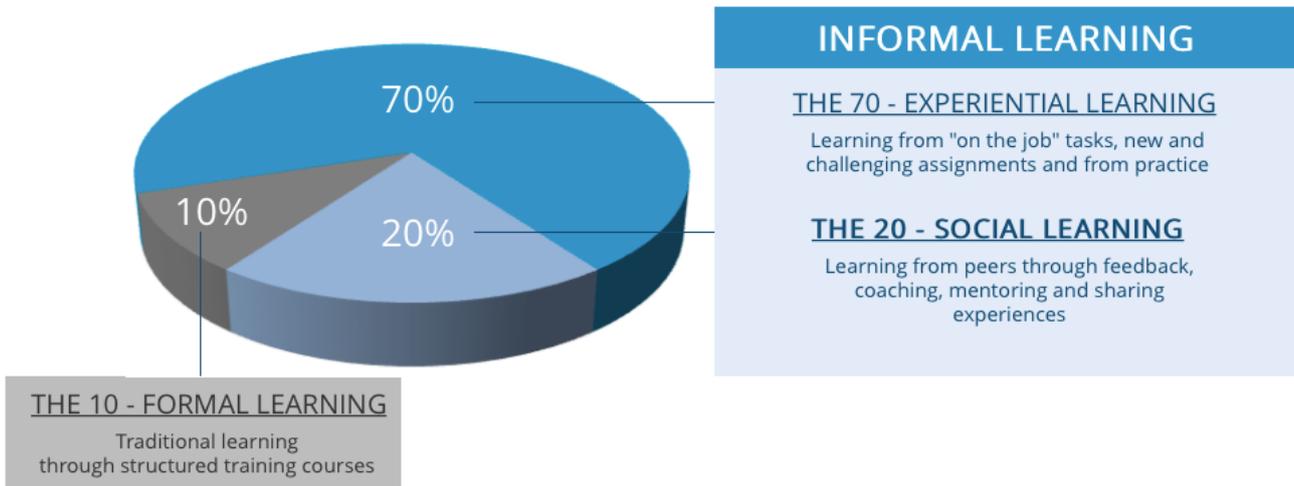
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# The 70:20:10 learning framework

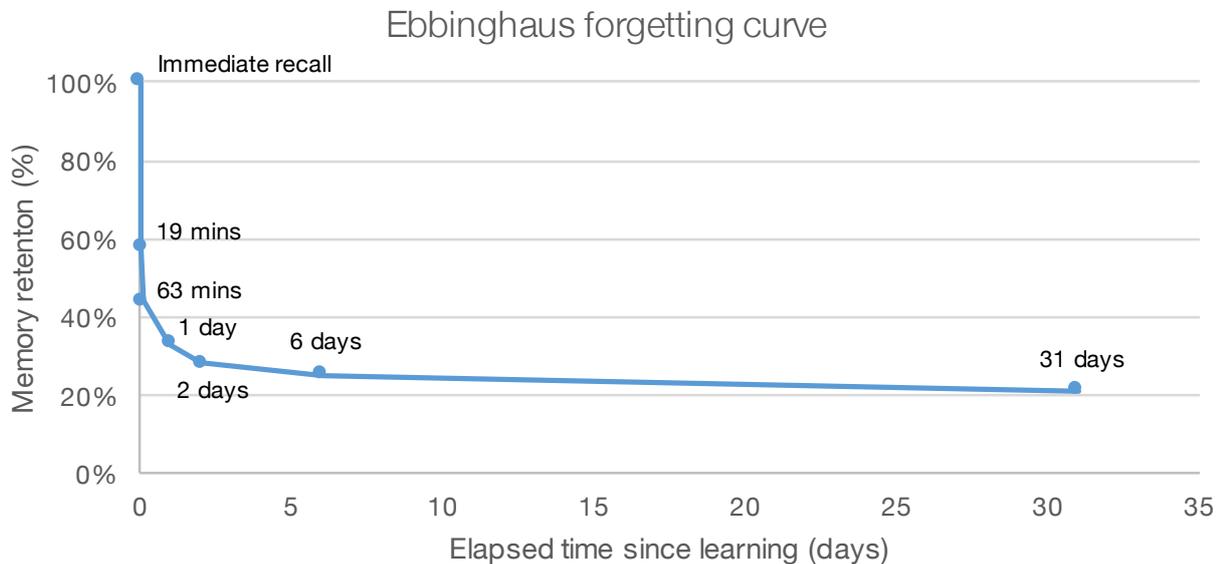
The 70:20:10 learning framework isn't a new concept. Over the last few decades, a variety of studies have shown that roughly 70 percent of adult learning and development happens through experiences, 20 percent through observations and social interactions with others, and 10 percent through structured formal training. How can organizations that want to get the most out of their workplace training programs utilise this time-tested understanding of how people learn?

**90%**  
of learning happens informally

## Social learning is the key.



# Why Formal training is so ineffective



Formal training, conducted both in a classroom setting or via e-learning is still the norm in many workplaces and continues to be what many organisations spend most of their annual training budget on.

If you have ever attended a training course or completed an e-learning module, this research explains what you probably already knew, which is that most of what you learn is quickly forgotten.

The work done, back in 1885, by German Psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus best illustrates why formal training is so ineffective. From Ebbinghaus' extensive research he developed the "forgetting curve" which shows how information is lost over time when there is no attempt to retain it.

In fact, all forms of training that are episodic in nature will suffer from the same issue and will make far less impact than informal learning opportunities which naturally occur more frequently and spaced out over time.

The curve shows us that most of the new information is "forgotten" after only an hour or so.

# What exactly is social learning?

These days when we see the word “social” in front of a word, it can typically mean a specific link to social media use, e.g. social selling, social media marketing etc. In the case of social learning, whilst platforms such as Twitter can be excellent forums for social learning, just simply adding social media usage to a training course does not automatically make it social learning.

Social learning is learning that results from an individual's active and passive interactions with other people.

This includes learning that:

- ▶ Takes place as part of shared work experiences.
- ▶ Occurs through observation of events in the workplace.
- ▶ Is spurred by interactions with peers.
- ▶ Is prompted by feedback and coaching from mentors and other co-workers.

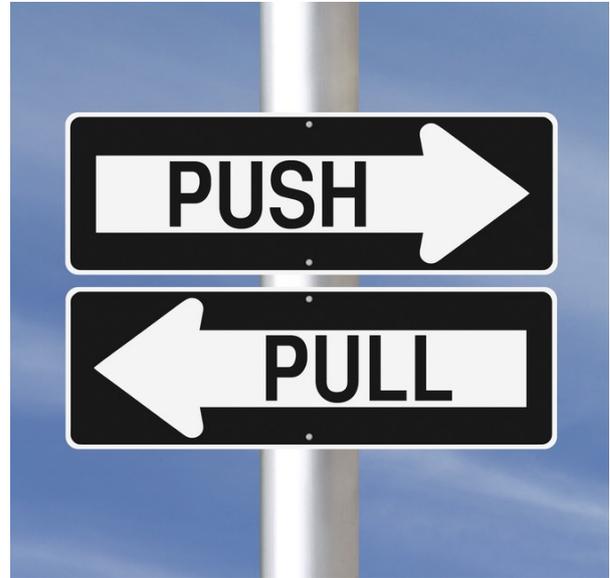
This informal learning doesn't follow a predetermined schedule or a set curriculum. Instead, it answers questions as they arise and is therefore highly effective because the right information is learned at the right time.



# Push vs Pull

According to the Harvard Business Review's "The Social Data Revolution(s)," individuals generated more data in 2009 than in all the preceding years combined. The result of this continuing flood of data is an online world defined by the collaborative contributions of the people who use it, and it has undeniably changed the way people learn.

In the past, adults interested in exploring a new topic turned to books written by experts for the facts they needed. Today, the Internet and social media offer instant connection, and everyone is welcome to share their experiences with a global audience. Customer reviews now guide decisions about everything from the products people purchase to the service providers they select. Twitter, Facebook and other forms of social media make it easy to encounter new ideas. Search engines like Google put the answers to all kinds of queries at people's fingertips, and communities like Quora allow anyone with a question to find the solution they need almost instantly without having to wade through a lot of superfluous data.



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The rapid pace of technological development and innovation is changing more than the way people learn. It is also altering the way they interact and their expectations. These evolutions inevitably impact the marketplace, and organizations that hope to thrive need to be ready to react.

Formal training and e-learning is almost always based on content that is pushed out or prescribed to individuals. In contrast, informal learning is self-directed and typically driven by a need for the learner to fill a skill or knowledge gap as required for a particular project or through their own desire for career progression.

Harnessing the power of the 70:20:10 learning framework and implementing strategies that increase opportunities for employees to learn socially can help organizations strengthen employee engagement, improve performance and close the skills gap in critical areas.

In its *Global Human Capital Trends 2016* report by Deloitte, they note this important shift from a content-centric “push” approach to a learner-centric “pull” approach stating that:

“Employees need to be viewed as customers to be satisfied, rather than as students to be pressured into traditional learning classrooms.”

# Social learning + Technology = some pretty powerful learning!!

From  
**Quora**



Barack Obama wrote this · ↗ Iran Nuclear Deal · 11 Sep

### Would a rejection of the Iran nuclear deal by the US Congress be a vote for war?

 Barack Obama, President of the United States  
383.8k Views · Upvoted by Marc Bodnick, Former Stanford PhD student in Politics · Sina Taghva, Born and living in Tehran · David Waddell, BBC journalist, international specialist  
Answer featured in NBC News and 5 more.

The congressional vote on the Iran nuclear agreement is the most consequential foreign policy debate our country has had since the invasion of Iraq in 2003. So thank you for asking this question, i... (more)

Upvote 14k Downvote Comments 202+ Share 273

You can see from this example that by leveraging the simple technology offered by Quora, a question does not only find an answer but finds an answer from the most qualified person to give one.

Learning socially already happens naturally within small teams. We can now leverage technology to amplify these same positive aspects of learning socially, expanding them across geographic and functional silos and allowing an entire organization to benefit from a culture of collaboration.

While people have already latched onto these new ways of learning in their private lives, the pace of change is slow for many enterprise learning management programs.

After devoting considerable time and resources to developing formal and e-learning training programs, organizations often find it difficult to change course.

Referring again to the Global Human Capital Trends 2016 report by Deloitte, one of its key suggestions to companies regarding learning was:

“Use technology to drive employee-centric learning: Mobile, social, and web-based platforms that can deliver on-demand learning content are “must-have” capabilities.”

# 5 simple ways to start social learning in your organization today

The key to unlocking the potential that the 70:20:10 learning framework offers, is to start by looking for opportunities to add social learning to existing training programs first.

Here are some simple suggestions for you to start learning socially in your workplace:

1. **Create a Community of Practice.** Form a group from recent attendees of a formal training session or e-learning module. After completing the course, provide the group with a common platform to discuss ongoing questions with the trainer or subject matter expert and to share experiences with each other.
2. **Add social elements to existing human capital programs.** Programs conducted over a period of time such as for graduates, new joiners, leadership or high potential employees are ideal for supplementing with a social learning dimension. Provide the cohort with a common platform and encourage them to share questions, concerns, ideas and experiences with their fellow peers.
3. **Transform your mentor program into an e-mentor program.** Mentor programs can be extremely powerful if done well. However, they often run out of steam due to the logistical challenges of connecting mentors and mentees outside of their own day to day jobs. Moving the interactions from a face to face format to an online platform can help to overcome these challenges by ensuring the partners can connect during times that suit them.
4. **Move your Executive chats and Management town halls from being periodic events to a platform that can sustain an ongoing dialogue.** Many organizations understand the value of ensuring employees hear and learn directly from their senior management and therefore conduct periodic executive chats online or town hall briefings in person. However, the message this sends to the employees is “we know this is important to you but we are only willing to spend a couple of hours of our time”. Why not move these typically one-sided presentations onto a platform that can facilitate two-way dialogue that is accessible to employees at all times. Employees will feel more engaged and connected with management and perhaps the management team could take turns once a week responding to the best questions.

**5. Take any company best practices document or manual and transform it into a live and interactive best practices portal.** All companies have a set of best practices which are unique to the company and are usually linked to the company's culture, values or may even give it a competitive edge. These could be for customer service support or after sales service and are typically housed in documents or manuals on the intranet and passed to new employees as they join. To ensure that these best practices are fully embraced and entrenched within a company's culture, why not take the key learnings from these static document and convert them into an FAQ format. Make these FAQs available on a common forum which can be moderated by "champions" charged with answering ongoing questions and fostering discussions.

And finally, for companies that want to build a culture of teamwork, knowledge sharing and inclusion from the ground up, consider rolling out a social learning platform to all employees. If you are ready to move from a learning philosophy of pushing content out, to a world where learning is self-directed and happens naturally amongst peers - the best approach is to roll out a single social platform. For it to be successful you would need to seed it with some great content, have strong management buy-in and participation, have it moderated by key contributors and then watch it grow organically.

## About UnTapMe

UnTapMe is a platform designed to facilitate social learning in the workplace. Secure and user-friendly, it allows people to ask questions in forums so that they can find the right information at the right time. It fosters self-directed, informal, peer-to-peer learning and rewards users with badges that reflect both their learning activities as well as their efforts to educate others.

*To explore the benefits of learning socially, discover more about UnTapMe or sign up for a free trial on [www.untapme.com](http://www.untapme.com). Alternatively, contact us at [info@untapme.com](mailto:info@untapme.com).*