

Recent review of literature describes an accelerated pace of change that we have been observing for a considerable period of time. There appears to be converging forces that are reshaping the learning environment. They are:

- First, the rapid de-institutionalization of the learning environment,
- Second, individuals becoming the mobile economic unit-employers no longer becoming the source of job security, health care, retirement benefits, or formal learning, and
- Third, the rapid and selective access to knowledge through multiple delivery platforms.

It is evident that the traditional methods for acquiring knowledge through organized and structured programs of instruction seems to be coming to an end. This transition will be disruptive and organizations, both public and private, will scramble to identify their roles and sustainable strategies.

These issues are not brand new. Many of the factors that I am commenting about have existed for long periods of time. However, I believe they may just be accelerating.

#### Let's focus first on "de-institutionalization"—

The focus starts with the question "Why do large companies and institutions exist? Several historical factors may be a part of the answer;

1. People form organizations and pledge allegiance and gather together to get things done. The institution with many people co-located essentially minimizes transaction costs of communication and working processes. When a group of people shares a purpose and they have established roles, responsibilities, and defined modes of communication it is easier to make things happen.

However with the Internet and a proliferation of social networking and collaboration tools, a person can communicate with almost anyone at any time, no matter where they are or who they are. Now many report working for a large organization often imposes high transaction costs –it is often easier and less

expensive to manage a virtual organization than a highly structured one. Institutions are full of bureaucracy, procedures, approval processes, and other structures that attempt to defend the integrity of the institution.

In the connected world, communities form around shared interests and limit processes to what are necessary to get the work done.

2. The rise of the factory, and the other organizations modeled after it, which was prominent in last industrial age in response to economic pressures was created to achieve economies of scale for competitive purposes. With the dramatic reduction in barriers to entry into manufacturing and other service businesses, the concept of economies of scale is no longer the powerful force driving the formation of large institutions.

Both of the following factors are leading to fragmented, modular, often temporary units of production.

### Now, let's look at the factor of the individual as the ultimate economic enterprise

Instead of General Electric, General Motors, etc. we are moving towards "YOU, INC." where every individual must become an active value creator that is highly mobile, self-directed, talented, and entrepreneurial.

Therefore no longer will an employer be the sources of income, benefits, or education and training. Individuals will have to perform all the functions that business and institutions provided in the past, such as:

- Developing capabilities and talents,
- Positioning their product or service in the marketplace,
- Branding and marketing,
- Financial planning and management, and
- Strategy development and long range planning

### The last factor is the Access to learning solutions

No matter how skilled a teacher is on any subject, there are many others that know more about specific aspects of the subject. Therefore why

limit your learning to one source that is institutionally provided. There are dramatically growing sources of learning available—on-line—in modular and easily accessible forms. Networks will continue to guide the learner in their pursuit of knowledge. These capabilities will provide the individual the opportunity to grow their own talent on a continuing basis.

Institutions have often been the screen or authenticator of relevant learning by having criteria and purchasing power to select and provide training. In this new universe, authentication models will need to be introduced, standards need to be created and validated, and credentialing will need to become more modular.