



## The Future of Learning and Business

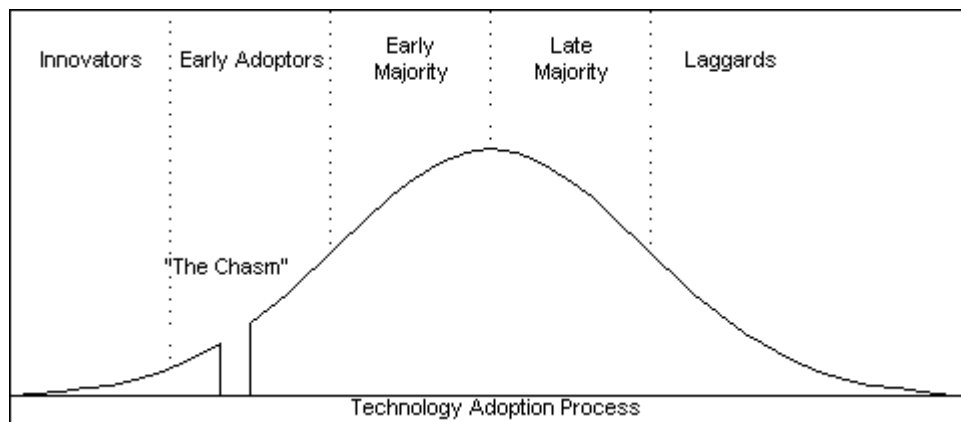
### Winning Approaches to Corporate Learning on Internet Time

## ■ Research Notes and Working Papers

Also see [commerce](#), e-business

### Technology Adoption Cycle

The needle on the time machine's chronometer won't be pointing at exactly 2002 when you arrive. Time is relative. What's old hat to some is brand new to others. Learning technology, as in so much of life, follows the "Technology Adoption Cycle."



*Legend: When a new technology is introduced, a handful of enthusiast geeks adopt it for its novelty; they put up with spotty performance, sloppy or nonexistent documentation, and deplorable service.*

*As the technology is refined, it reaches a point where daring visionaries seize upon it to solve problems; they don't mind some rough edges so long as their larger purpose is served.*

*When the early adopters have proven the technology viable, the producer has stabilized performance, and a vendor has positioned it in a user-friendly package, the "early majority" of levelheaded mainstream folks buy in.*

*Seeing the acceptance in the marketplace and the success of their peers, the conservative "late majority" hop on board.<sup>[1]</sup>*

*Finally, the laggards adopt the technology when they're forced kicking and screaming to conform because it's a "no-brainer."*

*Some technologies (e.g. the telephone, color television) take decades to reach the laggards. Others (e.g. the Web, the hula hoop) make great strides in a year or two.*

*Are you an early adopter? Part of the early majority? Your past may be another person's future. Or what was hot in Silicon Valley two years ago may just be filtering out to your location today.*

*Nationwide, we're looking at 2002 ± 2 years*

## Where you stand depends upon where you sit



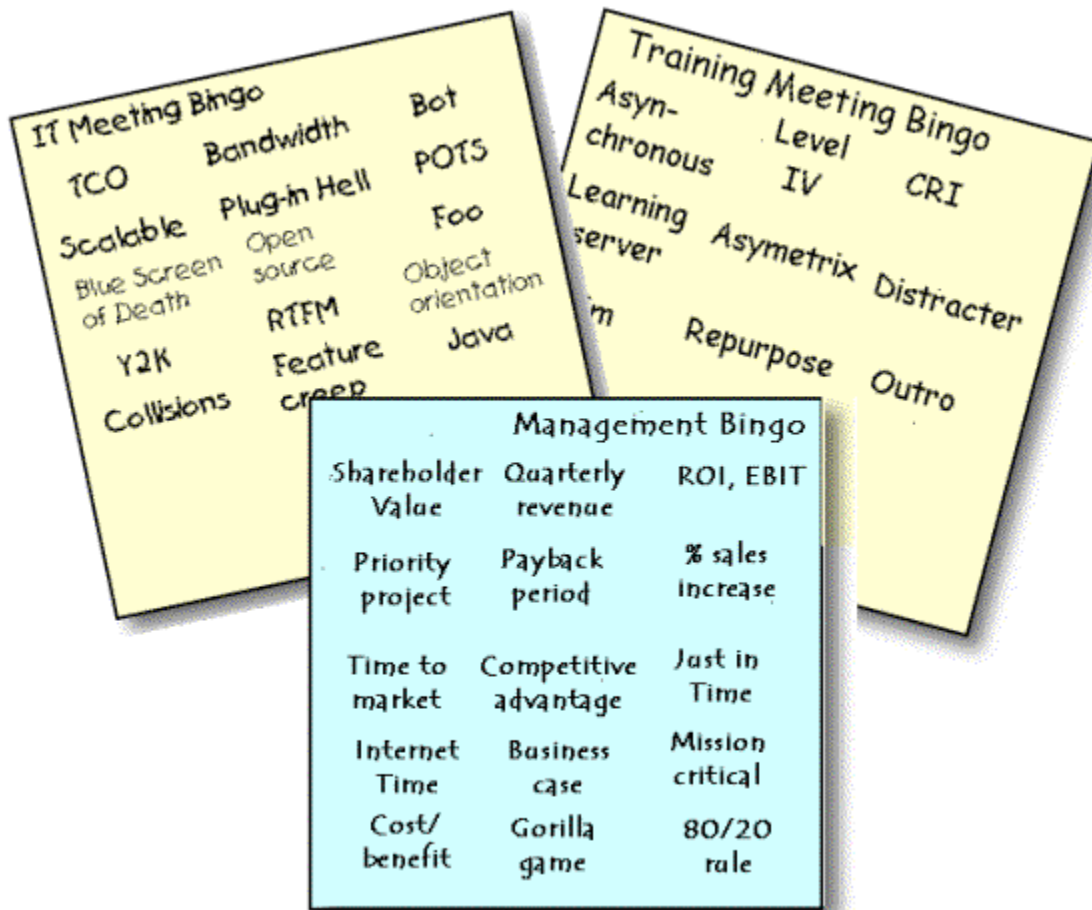
**Speaking in tongues.** Most broad training and knowledge initiatives fail to meet expectations due to misunderstandings. Line managers, information technology professionals, and training professionals leave their silos to coordinate a project but speak different languages.

**Senior managers** who sponsor e-learning speak of increasing shareholder value, maintaining competitive advantage, cycle time, sales growth, ROI, and profitability. **IT professionals** who provide the virtual classroom speak of bandwidth, total cost of ownership, and mission-critical applications. **Training pros** talk of

competencies, instructional design, gap analysis, and synchronicity. All want optimum performance but each defines "performance" differently. [\[2\]](#)

## Buzzword Bingo

Dilbert has introduced a new pastime into business meetings: **buzzword bingo**. Each player receives a different bingo card containing the latest buzzwords. Peels of laughter accompany the first shout of Bingo! Generally, the leader of the meeting is not amused.



## Appendix

### The Babble Factor

Many grand designs for “learning organizations” fall apart before ever leaving the drawing board.

Construction on the Biblical Tower of Babel came to a halt when the builders began speaking different languages. Similarly, corporate learning initiatives often fail because the functions of IT, training, and management speak different languages.

Consider the word “performance.”

- To an IT professional, performance is measured in Mhz, baud, response time, and mean-time-before-failure.
- To a trainer, performance measures how well trainees can demonstrate a skill or do their jobs before and after training.
- To a senior manager, performance is measured in ROI, quarterly profitability, and market share.

[1] See Geoff Moore's *Crossing the Chasm* for the latest rendition of this concept.

[2] Thanks to Paula Bramante of Fleet Boston for this insight. See "The Babble Factor" in the Appendix for the full story.

[Executive Summary](#) ■ [Research Notes & Working Papers](#) ■ [The Network Age](#) ■ [Business](#) ■ [People](#) ■ [Learning](#) ■ [Technology](#) ■ [Organizations](#) ■ [Knowledge](#) ■ [Mangement](#) ■ [Decision-Making](#) ■ 

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