Learning Beyond the Platform

A Design Management Approach to Strengthening Everyday Learning at Victorinox

Graduation Project

Author: Cecilia Reber
Mentor: Katharina Herzog
Submission Date: 23.05.2025
Project Partner: Victorinox AG

Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts
School of Design, Film and Art

Bachelor of Arts in Product and Industrial Design
Specialization in Design Management

I. Abstract

This project explores how learning beyond formal structures can support a stronger learning culture. Focusing on Victorinox's marketing department, it examines how informal, socially embedded learning can become more relevant, visible, and impactful when integrated into everyday work.

Guided by the research question:

What learning opportunities beyond formal structures can better reflect employees' everyday learning needs and contribute to a stronger learning culture at Victorinox?

Findings highlight a disconnect between formal learning opportunities and the ways employees actually learn, often through collaboration, experimentation, and peer exchange. In response, a Community of Practice (CoP) is proposed as an intervention. The CoP is designed as a flexible, low-barrier format that encourages voluntary participation, shared ownership, and psychological safety.

Rather than treating learning as an isolated activity, the intervention integrates it into daily routines and supports a shift toward a more adaptive, trust-based learning culture.

Table of contents

II. List of Tables and Figures

III. Definitions

To understand the problem area and the proposed intervention, it is essential to define key concepts related to learning and organizational culture. The following definitions are drawn from established literature and adapted to fit the context of this project.

Term	Definition	Source
Forms of Learning		
Learning	Learning is a process where people actively engage with their surroundings and others, constantly gaining new understanding and skills. This happens as they tackle real problems and interact with their cultural environment.	Adapted from (Engeström, 1987)
Formal Learning	Formal learning is typically classroom-based, highly structured, and institutionally sponsored. It follows a planned curriculum and often occurs outside the flow of daily work.	Based on (Marsick & Watkins, 1990)
Informal Learning	Informal learning happens through dialogue, reflection, and everyday work activities.	Adapted from (Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Senge, 1990)

Table 01: Table of Definitions

Enablers of Learning

Relevance in Learning	Relevance in learning refers to how well a learning experience connects to an individual's real-world needs, tasks, and context. When learning feels directly applicable, it becomes more meaningful, engaging, and effective.	Adapted from (Garvin, 2000; Merrill, 2002)
Psychological Safety	Psychological safety is a shared belief within a team that the environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. It means people feel able to speak up, ask questions, admit mistakes, and challenge ideas without fear of embarrassment or punishment.	Adapted from (Edmondson, 1999)
Learning Culture	A learning culture refers to the shared values, practices, and norms in an organization that encourage continuous learning, knowledge sharing, open feedback, and the safe exploration of new ideas.	Based on (Garvin, 2000; Marquardt, 2002)

Learning Space

Community of Practice (CoP)	A Community of Practice is a group of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and interact regularly to learn how to do it better. Learning happens through shared practice, dialogue, and collaboration.	Adapted from (Wenger-Trayner, 1998)

Table 01: Table of Definitions

IV. AI Declaration

In this project, specific AI tools were used to enhance document quality:

- **DeepL:** Used exclusively for accurate text translations, maintaining the integrity of the original content.
- **ChatGPT** was used as a writing assistant to improve the structure, coherence, and academic tone of the document. This included refining the abstract, rephrasing the research question, clarifying key arguments, and enhancing the readability of research findings. Additionally, ChatGPT supported the formulation of conceptual visuals and summaries related to the design and communication strategy.
- **Grammarly:** Employed for grammar checking and stylistic improvements to ensure the document adhered to the best standards of written English.

These tools were used critically and selectively to enhance the quality of the final project, without compromising its originality or intellectual ownership. They collectively contributed to ensuring the project met all academic and linguistic criteria.

V. Acknowledgement

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people.

Special thanks go to **Joël Maier** for his trust and support, helping me connect with people, sharing feedback, and giving me valuable insights into everyday life at Victorinox.

Thank you to the **employees of Victorinox** and the **Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team**. Your openness and insights gave me a much better understanding of how learning really works inside an organization.

To **Katharina Herzog** — thank you for your encouragement, clear feedback, and patience throughout this process. It meant a lot.

To **Michela Lupi** — thank you for sharing your time and expertise. Your perspective helped shape and sharpen the final intervention.

To the **experts** who shared their thoughts and experiences with me: your input challenged and inspired my thinking.

And to everyone else who supported me along the way, through conversations, feedback, or encouragement, thank you.

Setting the Foundation

1. Introduction

In today's fast-changing organizational landscape, continuous learning is essential for adaptation and innovation. The idea that learning strengthens both responsiveness and employee engagement is not new. Over three decades ago, (Senge, 1990) argued that organizations thrive when they cultivate a learning culture. This remains highly relevant, as businesses face growing complexity and uncertainty (Garvin et al., 2008).

However, cultivating a learning culture is complex. Challenges include aligning individual learning goals with organizational priorities, overcoming resistance to change, and embedding learning in meaningful ways within everyday work (Garvin, 2000; Marquardt, 2002). While many organizations rely on formal training structures, these often fail to reflect how learning truly happens. Learning, especially informal learning, occurs through social interaction, experience, and unstructured peer exchange (Eraut, 2004).

Organizational culture plays a critical role in enabling or constraining learning. Whether a learning culture takes root depends on the organization's values, norms, and practices. (Janićijević, 2015).

This project explores how informal learning opportunities can be supported to strengthen a learning culture. Set within the marketing department of Victorinox, it investigates how a Community of Practice (CoP) can serve as a strategic intervention to embed learning into everyday routines, making it more visible, relevant, and responsive to real employee needs.

1.1 Social Change Roles

In my graduation project, I position myself through the lens of Deepa Iyer's social change roles (2020), identifying as a **Weaver, Builder, and Caregiver,** with strengths as a **Visionary**. As a Weaver, I build connections between individuals, teams, and systems to foster collaboration and alignment. As a Builder, I design structures that support sustainable change rather than short-term fixes. As a Caregiver, I create spaces where people feel seen, supported, and safe to contribute. This helps me respond to systemic challenges with clarity and care.

Figure 01: Social Change Ecosystem Roles.
Source: Iyer, D. (2020). Mapping Our Roles in the Social Change Ecosystem. SolidarityIs.org.

1.2. Context Victorinox and Scope

Victorinox, founded in 1884 by Karl Elsener in Ibach, Switzerland, is globally recognized for the iconic Swiss Army Knife. Over the years, Victorinox has grown into a global brand, committed to quality, precision, and functionality (Victorinox, n.d.).

Figure 02
Swiss Army Knife. Adapted from Huntsman, by Victorinox AG, 2025.
Retrieved from https://www.victorinox.com
© Victorinox AG. All rights reserved.

The Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team at Victorinox aims to cultivate a learning culture. Their role is to support employees in their learning journey and provide resources for learning through opportunities such as the learning platform. The platform offers employees access to different courses. However, employees say that they do not have the capacity to learn during their workday.

The learning platform offers a wide range of courses, from project management to product training. These courses are created in response to business needs. As a result, they do not always reflect employees' learning interests or everyday challenges. Not all employees use the same tools or face the same problems.

For this project, I focused on the marketing department at Victorinox.

Victorinox
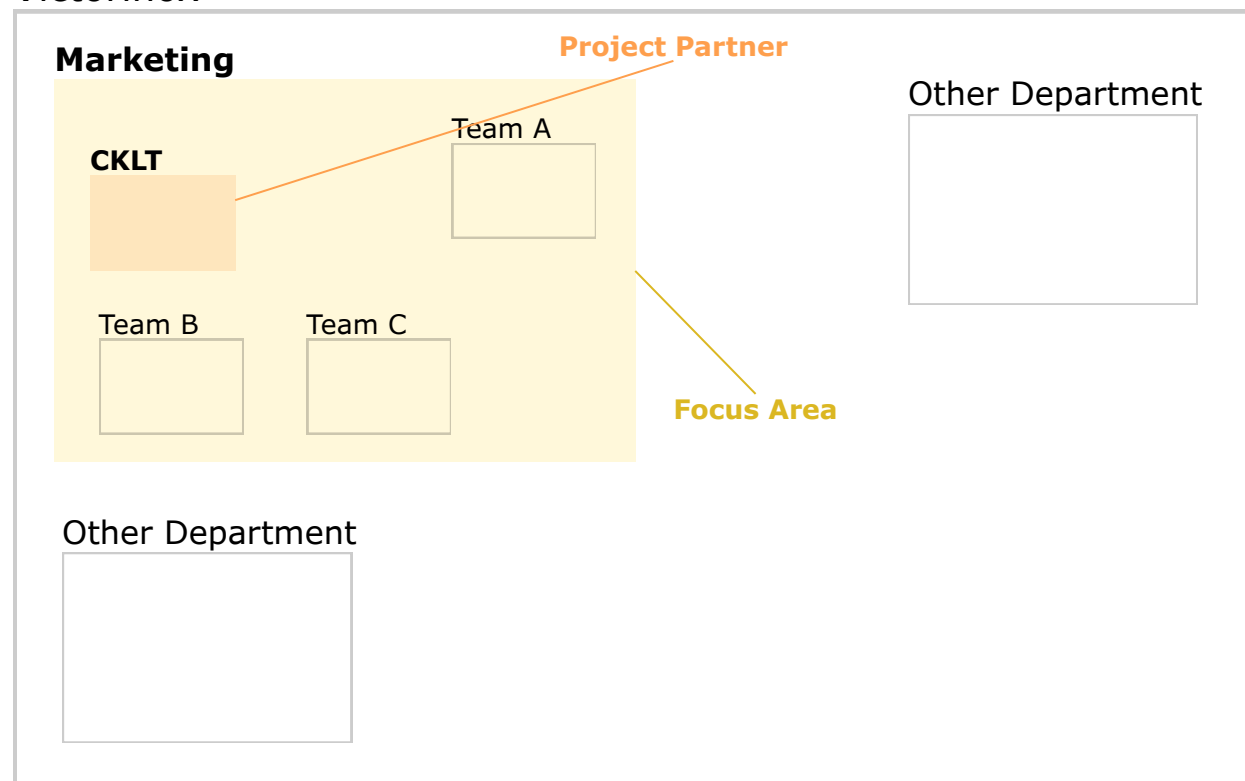
Figure 03: Focus Area (Reber, 2025)

1.3. Learning Ecosystem
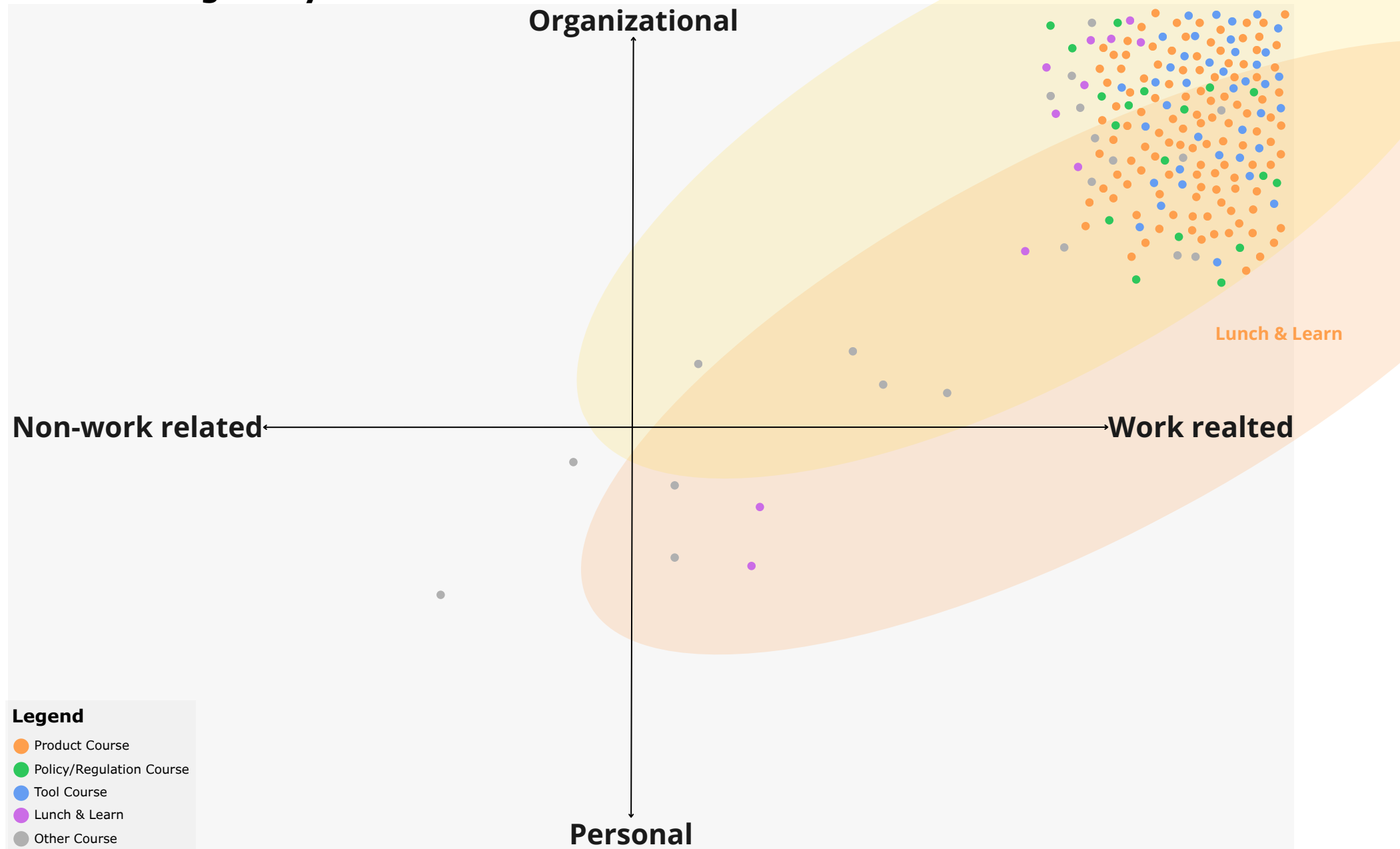
Figure 04: The Learning Ecosystem (Reber, 2025)

1.3.1. Annotation Learning Ecosystem

This visual maps the current learning ecosystem at Victorinox. Most formats are concentrated in the organizational, and work-related space. Informal formats like Lunch & Learn move beyond that, but remain centrally organized. Considering the 70-20-10 model, which highlights that only 10% of learning comes from formal training, this concentration reveals a disconnect: the existing ecosystem heavily emphasizes the 10%, while the 70%, learning through experience, and the 20%, social learning, remain underrepresented.

1.4. Stakeholder Map

Power refers to decision-making authority. **Influence** reflects stakeholder interest and involvement.

High Power

Keep Satisfied

HR

Key Players

Manager / Team Leads

Employees

Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team

Executives / Leadership Team

Low Influence — **High Influence**

Minimal Effort

None identified

Keep Informed

Blue-collar Employees (future potential)

Low Power
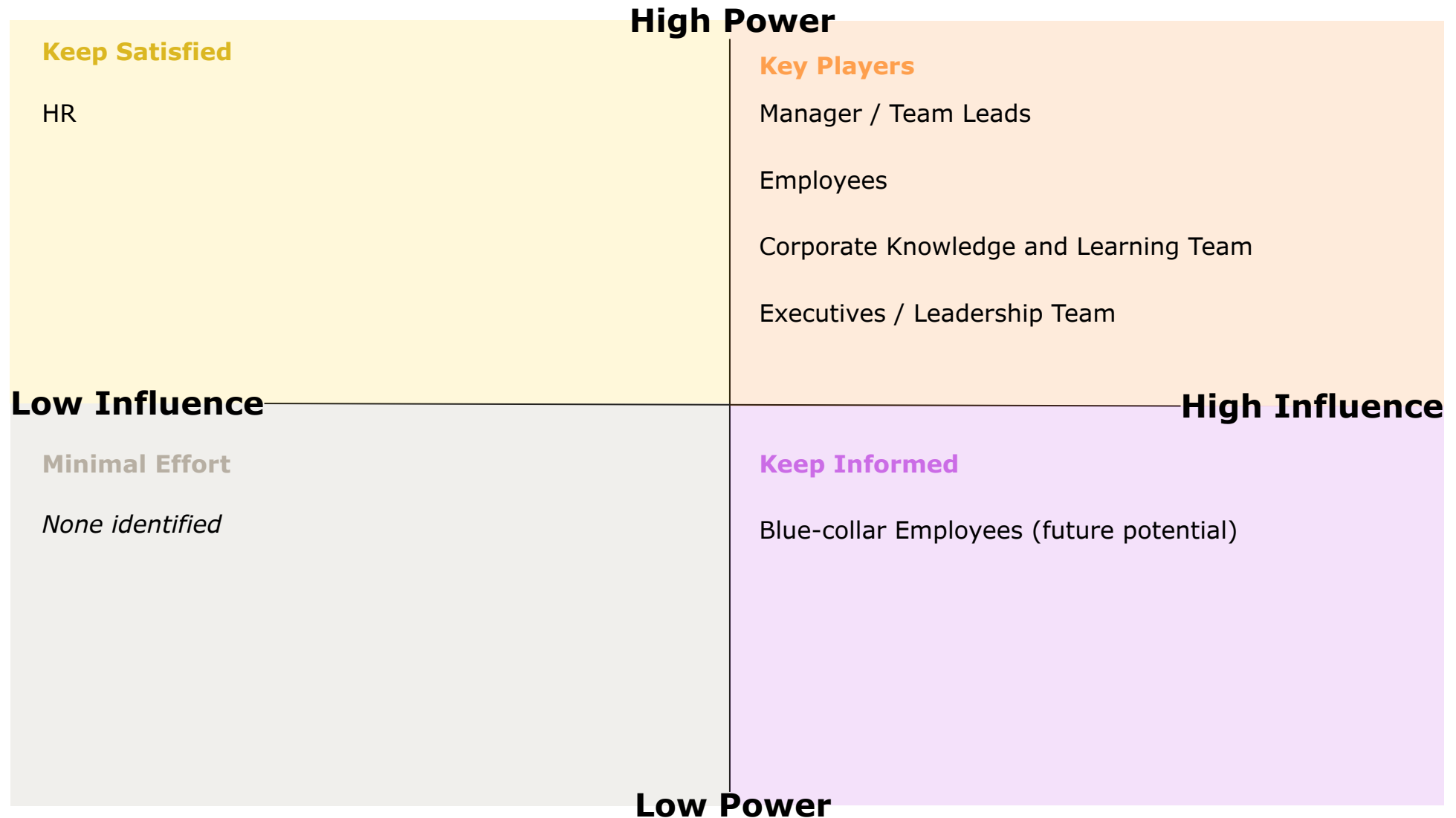
Figure 05: Stakeholder map. (Reber, 2025)

1.5. My Biases and Assumptions

Before starting this project, I brought in my own experiences from the corporate world — where learning often meant clicking through slides and HR chasing my manager about mandatory courses. I assumed that people simply do not want to learn because corporate learning felt like a task to complete, not something meaningful or relevant. Another bias was about the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team. I thought their main concern was getting people to use the learning platform, as if their purpose depended on driving traffic. Conversations and reflection showed me their role is part of a complex system where learning is strategic, cultural, and genuinely supports employees.

1.6. Problem Area

While the learning platform provides formal learning opportunities based on business needs, it does not always meet employees' learning needs. This creates a gap where **employees turn elsewhere to solve problems that feel more relevant to their roles and interests.**

1.7. Research Question

What learning opportunities beyond formal structures can better reflect employees' everyday learning needs and contribute to a stronger learning culture at Victorinox?

1.8. Thesis Structure and Methodology

This project combines research and design to explore how learning at Victorinox can become more relevant, visible, and culturally grounded. The process did not follow a linear path but moved through cycles of exploring, reframing, and iterating. Early insights from literature and field research informed the direction of the intervention, but ongoing conversations, testing, and reflection continued to reshape how the problem was understood. Rather than a phase that ends, research was embedded throughout the project, continuously informing design decisions. Field research within the marketing department, including observation, interviews, and expert input, revealed everyday learning practices and challenges. These insights were synthesized and translated into a strategic intervention, which was tested and adapted through iterative cycles. This approach allowed the project to stay responsive to the people and the culture it was designed for, and to hold space for complexity, change, and learning along the way.

1.9. Design Process

This design process started with exploration and helped me move between what was visible on the surface and what was going on underneath. It was an iterative process. I often circled back to earlier steps to make sense of new insights, deepen my understanding, and adjust ideas before bringing them to life.
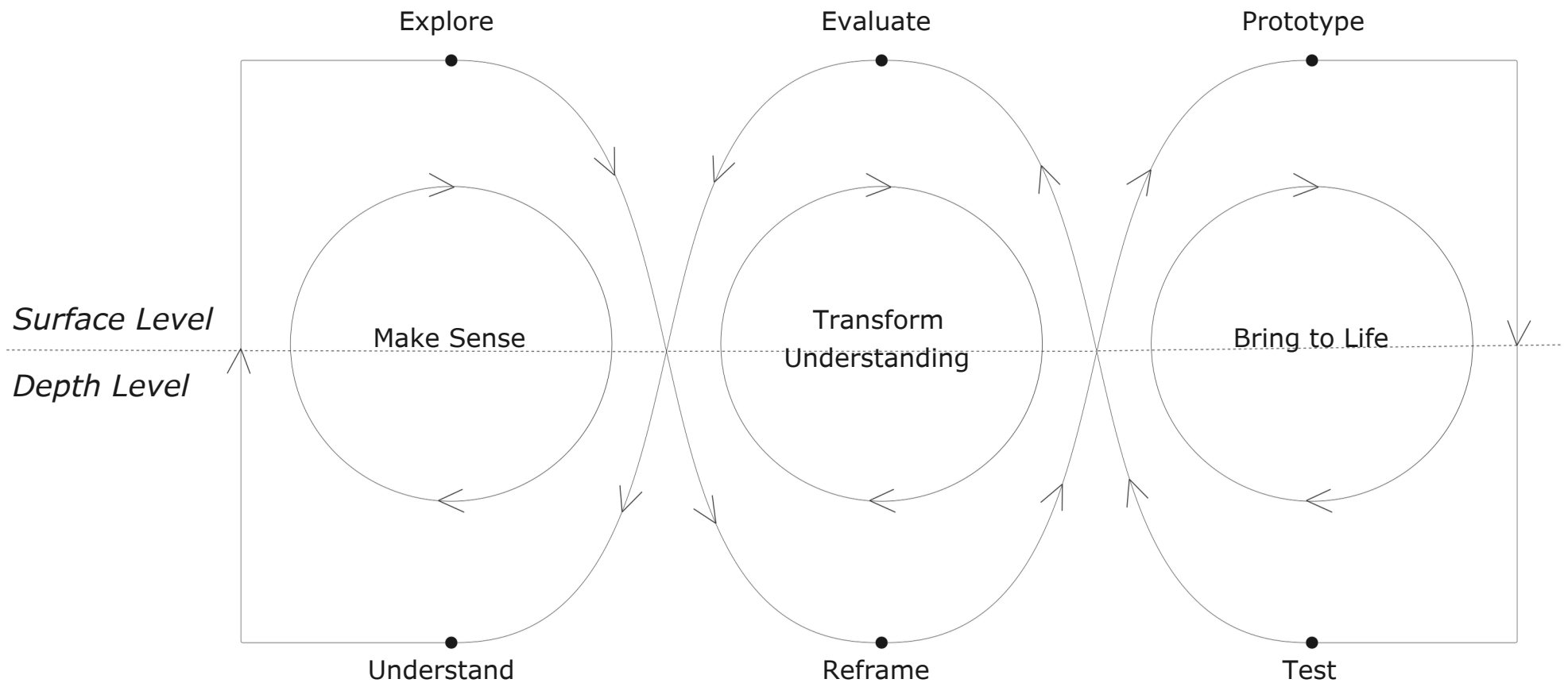
Figure 06: Design Process (Reber, 2025)

Learning from Literature

2. Literature Research

This section draws on literature about organizational learning, workplace culture, and informal learning. The literature helps clarify why the current gap between formal learning opportunities and actual learning needs exists, and what can guide a shift toward a more relevant and visible learning culture.

2.1. Learning in Organizations

Organizations are often expected to offer formal training to support development (Eraut, 2004). However, as Senge (1990) argues, learning in organizations goes beyond courses or certifications. A learning organization, in his words, is a place "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire" (p. 3). This broader view shifts the focus from structured programs to a culture that supports continuous growth, reflection, and shared purpose.

2.2. Informal Learning

Informal learning is spontaneous, non-institutional, and often unplanned. It happens in the moment. For example, asking a peer for help, reflecting on a mistake, or trying something new (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). In a rapidly changing environment, informal learning is often more aligned with employees' immediate needs than formal learning opportunities. It happens in real time, embedded in daily work, and responds to emerging challenges (Eraut, 2004).

Garvin (2000) emphasizes that when learning is treated as an additional task rather than integrated into everyday work, it is often deprioritized. This was echoed in my interviews: employees do not have hours to dedicate to platform-based learning. Yet they are constantly learning if supported and given the space. Informal learning thrives when it is trusted, recognized, and embedded in daily routines rather than framed as "extra" (Eraut, 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). This is especially relevant at Victorinox, where time and capacity are a barrier to learning.

2.3. Culture and Learning

Whether informal learning is given space depends on the organizational culture. Offering training is not enough. Organizations need to nurture a learning culture where trial and error, feedback, and learning from others are encouraged (Garvin, 2000).

Additionally, learning must be aligned with organizational goals and values to be sustainable. It is not simply about skills; it is about mindset and shared responsibility (Marquardt, 2002).

Nonetheless, Janićijević (2015) writes, culture, and learning are closely connected. An organization's spoken and unspoken norms — the way people share knowledge, who feels safe to ask questions, how mistakes are handled — directly influence whether learning is embraced or limited.

2.4. The 70-20-10 Model

The 70-20-10 model helps explain how learning typically happens at work. It was originally developed by Lombardo and Eichinger (1996) at the Center for Creative Leadership.

According to the model:
- **70%** comes from on-the-job experiences — taking on challenges, or solving problems.
- **20%** comes from social learning — feedback, mentoring, peer conversations.
- **10%** comes from formal training — training or courses.

The 70-20-10 model shows how workplace learning typically happens. At Victorinox, this insight is especially relevant. Employees may not always have time for scheduled training, but they learn constantly. The model reinforces that supporting a strong learning culture means investing in the 70 and 20 as much as the 10.

2.5. Conclusion Literature Research

The literature shows that most learning does not happen in formal settings. Learning is driven by doing, reflecting, and learning from others. Informal learning, team dialogue, and everyday experiences play a central role, especially when time and capacity are limited.

At Victorinox, the culture needs to support continuous learning in day-to-day work. This makes learning more relevant and visible. The focus should shift from delivering content to creating the right conditions for learning to happen naturally, through dialogue, feedback, and shared problem-solving.

Listening to People within the System

3. Field Research

To explore how learning is experienced in everyday work life at Victorinox, I conducted field research within the marketing department. This helped to uncover insights that go beyond what can be captured through formal learning data or platforms.

3.1. Objective

The goal was to understand the learning behaviors, perceived challenges, and cultural factors influencing learning, directly from the perspective of employees.

3.1. Methodology

This research phase combined ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews to explore how learning happens at Victorinox. Since April, I have also been working there, which gave me an insider perspective on everyday routines, informal interactions, and cultural dynamics. Being embedded in the organization allowed me to observe learning as it unfolded, in meetings, spontaneous conversations, and collaborative moments.

Semi-structured interviews complemented these observations by creating space for guided yet open dialogue. They allowed me to explore key topics while giving participants room to share their own experiences and perspectives freely (Muratovski, 2021).

This combination of methods helped surface not only what people say about learning but also how it plays out in practice. It often happens informally and is shaped by context, relationships, and work realities, as highlighted by Eraut (2004) Marsick and Watkins (1990).

3.3. Participants

The field research involved conversations with four employees from the marketing department to understand their day-to-day learning practices and needs. Additionally, I interviewed three members of the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team to gain insight into the organization's strategic learning efforts. To broaden the perspective, I also spoke with one expert in psychology and learning and development, one external human resources professional, and one representative from Patagonia, an organization recognized for its progressive learning culture (Reinhardt et al., 2010). These diverse participants provided contrasting perspectives that helped me understand workplace learning across different organizational and cultural contexts.

3.4. Key Findings

Theme	**Individual Learning Experience**			
Finding	Learning is included in annual goals, serving as an incentive for employees.	Learning is employees' responsibility.	People prefer to learn at their own pace and when it's most relevant to their needs.	The learning platform cannot accompany all needs to employees.

Theme	**Social and Cultural Dynamics**		
Finding	There are different understandings of what learning is.	Collaborative learning enhances engagement.	Employees aren't able to network naturally due to spatial restrictions.

Theme	**Organizational Environment and Support**		
Finding	The Corporate Knowledge & Learning Team aims to foster a positive Learning Culture.	The organizational culture fosters an open and honest dialogue.	Courses are created based on a business need.

Table 02: Key Findings

Making Sense of what I found

4. Research Synthesis

With the research synthesis, I want to connect insights that I got from the literature as well as the field research. It helps to identify gaps and opportunities in cultivating and fostering a learning culture at Victorinox.

4.1. Formal vs. Informal Learning

A key insight that I have from the literature (Eraut, 2004; Marsick and Watkins, 1990) and the interviews is that the current learning opportunities do not consider how and where most learning naturally happens. At Victorinox, the learning platform delivers structured content aligned with business goals. However, the field research revealed that employees often turn to peers, Google, or trial-and-error when solving actual problems. This mirrors the 70-20-10 model, where most learning (70%) occurs experientially. **The platform is currently positioned as the main learning opportunity.**

This means that future learning opportunities should not focus on expanding formal offerings, but instead support informal, everyday learning experiences that are embedded in employees' day-to-day work.

4.2. Learning and Its Relevance

Learning becomes effective for learners when it feels relevant (Garvin, 2000; Senge, 1990). This resonates with what I heard in conversation with an expert and the marketing employees. People prefer to learn at their own pace and when it is most relevant to their needs. For example, while a course on Excel might be useful for one employee, another might find it irrelevant. When learning does not match people's needs, it can feel like a task to complete, not something meaningful.

Finding

This means that **learning opportunities should be flexible and adaptable, catering to different roles, needs, and situations.**

4.3. The Role of Culture in Learning

I came across organizational culture in the literature (Janićijević, 2015) and the field research as an important element. To ask questions, experiment, and be okay with not knowing, people mentioned that they need a safe space where there is trust and openness. I wanted to understand safe spaces, trust, and openness. This is why I came across the concept of psychological safety. It refers to a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, people feel able to speak up, ask questions, admit mistakes, and share concerns without fear of being judged or penalized (Edmondson, 1999).

It is not just about what learning opportunities exist, but about how learning is made possible. Future learning opportunities should help shape a culture where asking questions, sharing ideas, and making mistakes feel safe.

4.4. Learning Beyond the Platform

The Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team is committed to enabling learning at Victorinox. However, I perceive their work as being centered around the platform rather than fully integrated into everyday work. Learning should be part of a bigger picture, not just about offering courses. About helping people to adapt, grow, and reflect together as part of their work environment (Senge, 1990).

This means that learning opportunities should be co-designed with teams, embedded into real workflows, and seen as an ongoing strategic capability, not a separate task.

4.5. What the Synthesis Shows

Through the research, I found that Victorinox takes learning seriously and invests in formal learning. However, the potential is not fully used. What I see is that cultural, contextual, and structural factors make it challenging for learning opportunities to fully connect with people's everyday work. Bridging this gap means shifting from course delivery to a learning environment embedded in daily work, shaped by trust and shared ownership.

These learnings set the basis for the next phase: designing an intervention that makes informal, relevant, and collaborative learning more visible and more valuable within the organization.

Based on my research insights, I defined performance specifications that provided a foundation for designing the intervention.

4.6 Performance Specifications

Performance Specification	Design Objective	Key Design Principle
1 **Foster Relevance and Self-Direction**	Design learning opportunities that reflect employees' real needs and interests.	• Allow autonomy and personal relevance in learning formats • Adapt activities to different roles and contexts • Enable employees to suggest topics and guide their learning
2 **Enable Informal Learning through Team Learning**	Make space for learning to happen organically through collaboration and reflection.	• Prioritize peer exchange and shared learning • Encourage spontaneous knowledge sharing across roles • Normalize informal learning as equally valuable • Support co-creation and open dialogue across teams
3 **Support Visibility Without Pressure**	Make learning practices visible in a way that fosters trust.	• Use soft visibility formats like storytelling or journals • Focus recognition on curiosity and appreciation • Allow the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team to observe learning patterns without imposing formal tracking

Table 03: Performance Specifications

Designing
the Intervention

5. Designing the Intervention

This section illustrates how the intervention evolved from initial ideas into its final form. Rather than aiming for a perfect solution, the process was iterative. Shaped by context, feedback, and reflection. I stayed close to what people shared, allowing insights to guide the design.

At first, I explored two strategies: the SMART Challenge and a Community of Practice (CoP). The SMART Challenge invited teams to reflect on recent learning in a flexible, low-barrier way. While both supported informal learning, the CoP offered more structure, depth, and long-term potential. It aligned more strongly with the culture and needs at Victorinox. Based on this, I decided to further develop the Community of Practice.

5.1. Why One Strategy Was Enough

As the project progressed, it became increasingly clear that one strategy stood out, not only in theory but in practice. The **Community of Practice (CoP)** emerged as the most relevant and impactful way to strengthen everyday learning at Victorinox. A CoP is a small, self-organized group of employees who meet regularly to reflect, exchange knowledge, and learn together through dialogue. It offers structure and creates space for learning that feels natural rather than formal.

This decision is grounded in the **70-20-10** model (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1996), which highlights that 20% of learning stems from **social interactions.** This includes peer conversations, and shared reflection. While Victorinox has invested significantly in formal learning opportunities (the 10%), the real opportunity lies in enabling the informal and social dimensions of learning. My field research clearly showed that learning at Victorinox frequently happens informally. Through spontaneous exchanges, peer support, and problem-solving embedded in daily routines. A CoP directly builds on this finding, offering a structured yet flexible space for these interactions to flourish intentionally.

Moreover, Victorinox's current culture is already conducive to this kind of intervention. For instance, the existing "Lunch & Learn" format, informal lunchtime presentations, demonstrates both employee interest and cultural openness toward peer-led learning initiatives. All employees I interviewed had participated, despite mentioning limited time or capacity. **This suggests that when learning feels relevant, timely, and integrated into existing routines, it becomes not only feasible but also welcomed.**

A CoP embodies the principles surfaced in the research: learning that is relevant, embedded in work, socially supported, and culturally resonant. It is not a rejection of other potential strategies, but rather a strategic response to the specific needs, constraints, and opportunities identified within the Victorinox context. By fostering peer exchange, self-directed exploration, and psychological safety, the CoP holds the potential to activate a more **visible, relevant, and collaborative learning culture.**

5.2. First Testing Cycle

Following the decision to focus on a CoP as a intervention, I initiated a first testing cycle to explore how the concept resonates with potential participants. Testing is not solely about validating a final solution. It serves to learn from context, to uncover assumptions, evaluate feasibility, and refine early ideas through real-world engagement (Stappers & Sanders, 2008). This first test was intentionally low-threshold, aiming to examine how the CoP concept fits within the specific learning culture at Victorinox.

I reached out to three employees from different teams within the marketing department and shared a short documentation (see Appendix F) that outlined the intent and structure of the CoP. To guide the evaluation, I asked the following four questions:

1.Could you imagine taking part in a CoP?
 a. If yes, what would motivate you to take part?
 b. If no, what is stopping you?

2.Which topics are currently of particular interest to you? *(e.g., new tools, AI in marketing, best practices from projects)*

3.What would have to be in place for the format to be helpful and relevant for you? *(e.g., time frame, moderation, group size, documentation, etc.)*

4. Is there anything you think is missing from the idea or that you would do differently?

The goal was not to test a polished format, but to explore how the concept of a CoP is understood, what would support participation, and what design considerations would need to be addressed to ensure relevance and adoption.

5.2.1. What Worked

Overall, participants responded positively to the idea of a CoP, particularly when the topics felt directly connected to their day-to-day work. Examples like using AI in marketing were named as potential interests. The small group format was seen as especially valuable, offering psychological safety.

5.2.2. What Needs Clarification

While the idea itself was well received, the open structure of the CoP raised questions. Some participants expressed uncertainty about how it would work in practice, and a preference for more defined boundaries or a basic framework to help guide participation. One participant said:

"What I miss is a system for bringing the 'right' people together."

This highlights a common challenge in informal learning formats: creating just enough structure to support participation, without undermining flexibility.

5.2.3. What Needs to Be Reconsidered

Although interest was high, the issue of time and capacity was repeatedly mentioned. Because the CoP would take place outside of formal work obligations, participation could feel like an extra burden. One participant noted that having a supervisor who actively supports and recognizes informal learning would significantly reduce the barrier to joining.

The CoP's success not only depends on design choices, but on how learning is positioned within the broader organizational culture. Without cultural endorsement, especially from leadership, informal learning can remain undervalued and underutilized.

5.3. Iteration

The first testing cycle showed clear interest in the CoP, especially when topics are relevant, and the format allows for informal, small-group dialogue. However, it also revealed barriers: unclear structure, limited time, and the need for visible support.

These insights shaped the first iteration. Supervisor support is key to legitimizing participation and lowering barriers. To keep the format accessible, the CoP must remain informal yet purposeful, offering light guidance without feeling like another formal meeting.

Rather than just confirming the concept, the testing cycle provided direction for refinement. It clarified that the CoP should be easy to join, focused on dialogue over outcomes, and supported, but not controlled, by the organization.

5.4. Second Testing Cycle

To further develop the CoP format, I conducted a second testing cycle with Michela Lupi, a sociologist who supports organizations in driving change through facilitation and coaching. I shared the evolving concept with her to gain an expert perspective on how the CoP could be more clearly positioned, practically implemented, and better communicated to key stakeholders (see Figure 5).

This conversation gave me valuable insights into accessibility, ownership, and implementation. It also helped clarify how the CoP could gain visibility while remaining grounded in day-to-day work practices.

5.4.1. Key Conditions for Participation

Michela Lupi said simplicity and ease of entry are essential. The CoP should require minimal preparation and feel natural rather than demanding. A space for open dialogue, not performance, creates the psychological safety needed for participation. Instead of focusing on polished outcomes, the emphasis should be on authentic exchange and mutual learning.

5.4.2. What does not work

Too much structure risks undermining the informality that gives the CoP its value. If perceived as another formal meeting, the initiative may lose traction. Including blue-collar employees remains a challenge due to differing work rhythms and access to shared time, meaning the initial focus is more feasible within white-collar environments. Without visible support from leadership, the CoP may lack legitimacy and could be deprioritized. When participation feels like "extra work", employees are unlikely to invest time or energy.

Note: Since Victorinox is a production company, I wanted to explore whether it is possible to include both white-collar and blue-collar employees. While white-collar employees typically work in office-based, salaried roles, blue-collar employees are often involved in production or manual tasks and follow different work rhythms and shift structures.

5.4.3. What Needs to be Reconsidered

The CoP should be framed as a complement to formal training, not a replacement. Making this distinction explicit. For example, by contrasting current learning opportunities with what the CoP offers, can help clarify its added value. Participation should be voluntary, allowing space for experimentation and informal reflection. Rather than relying on KPIs, success can be observed through emerging learning patterns, increased interaction, and evolving team dynamics. These signs are more in line with the learning-by-doing nature of the CoP.

5.4.4. Facilitation and Ownership

While the CoP remains informal, light facilitation may help anchor early sessions. If needed, a rotating peer facilitator can help maintain rhythm without introducing hierarchy. Topics may be suggested centrally, but participants should also bring their own ideas, fostering both ownership and relevance. Flexibility and shared responsibility are important to sustaining engagement over time.

5.5. The Final Intervention

Based on feedback from employees and expert input, the CoP has been refined into a low-barrier, informal learning format designed to support relevant, peer-led exchange.

Small, self-organized groups of four to five employees who meet regularly to explore topics of shared interest. These topics can be suggested, but are ideally brought in by the employees to ensure relevance. A shared digital journal supports visibility and knowledge transfer while keeping documentation light. This format reflects the need for psychological safety, autonomy, and simplicity, essential conditions for participation.

Participation remains voluntary. To maintain consistency without adding formal structure, the CoP allows for light facilitation in early sessions and encourages rotational leadership within the group. This fosters ownership while keeping hierarchy low.

The CoP is positioned as a meaningful complement to formal training, creating space for collaborative reflection, dialogue, and informal learning embedded in daily work.

Initially, the CoP served primarily as a space for knowledge sharing. Through the iterative process, it became clear that it also functions as a catalyst for shifting mindsets. It enables more distributed ownership of learning and fosters a culture of shared curiosity and co-creation.

Rather than offering a static solution, the CoP is designed as a living system: adaptable to changing needs, evolving team dynamics, and emerging topics over time.

While the CoP is designed to be broadly accessible, there are natural limitations in some areas of the organization. In departments like production, where employees work on machines and are responsible for meeting daily output goals, participation is not feasible without disrupting essential operations. However, for employees who work at their desks or have more flexible schedules, the CoP is entirely possible. In these contexts, it can be integrated into existing rhythms and routines without requiring major structural change.

The CoP addresses practical concerns like time, relevance, and recognition, making it accessible, purposeful, and rooted in employees' daily work. It also reflects a broader shift: from engaging in formal learning opportunities to co-creating learning experiences.

Over time, this can strengthen a more adaptive, participatory learning culture across the organization. However, fostering such a culture requires more than introducing a new format. It invites reflection:

- **What kind of culture enables people to learn together?**
- **How can participation be made possible for everyone, not just in theory, but in practice?**

These questions remain and must be held with shared responsibility by leadership and employees.

The CoP is a step in that direction, but the culture it needs to thrive must be continuously shaped and sustained.

5.6. Expanding the Learning Ecosystem
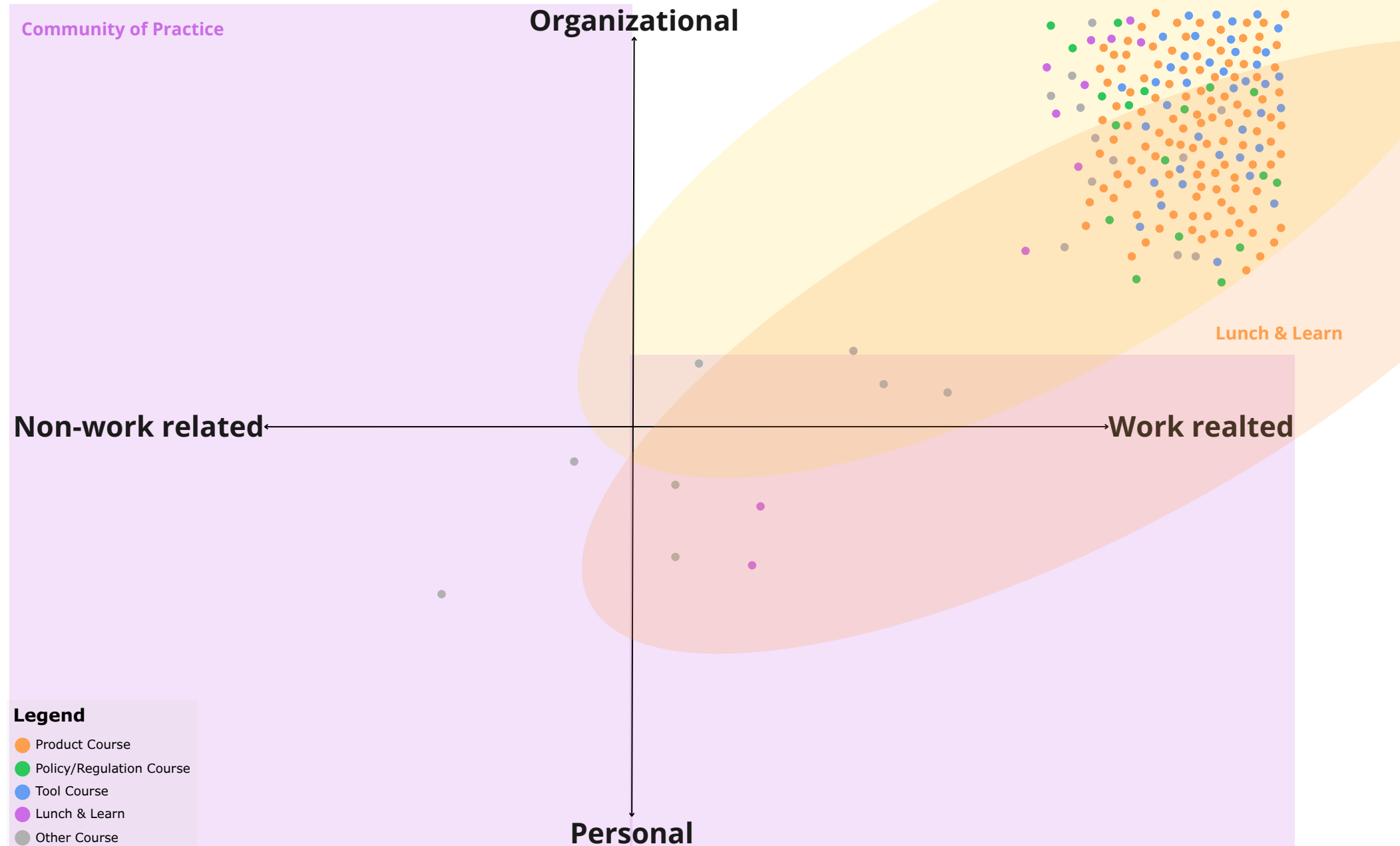
Figure 07: The expanded Learning Ecosystem (Reber, 2025)

5.6.1. Annotation Expanding the Learning Ecosystem

This updated visual includes the Community of Practice (CoP) and shows how it expands the existing learning ecosystem at Victorinox. While formats like the learning platform and Lunch & Learn remain concentrated in the work-related space, the CoP reaches into more personal, peer-driven, and experiential areas. It fosters shared learning within everyday work, without replacing what exists. The 70-20-10 model shows that most learning happens through experience (70%) and social interaction (20%). The CoP helps make these often-overlooked dimensions more visible, **complementing formal learning rather than competing with it.**

Evaluating
the Intervention

6. Evaluation Plan

This section evaluates the CoP based on performance specifications, risks, and feasibility. It considers both short-term implementation and long-term adaptability within the organizational culture at Victorinox. The goal is not to judge success, but to assess how the intervention responds to real needs, fosters learning, and enables ongoing evolution.

6.1. Risk Analysis

Designing and implementing a CoP comes with certain risks. One of the main risks is limited participation due to time constraints or a lack of prioritization from leadership. Without clear support, the CoP could be perceived as an optional "extra" rather than a valuable learning space. Another risk lies in the open format: while it encourages flexibility, some employees may feel uncertain without clear guidance, reducing engagement. Additionally, if the CoP becomes over-facilitated or overly structured, it could undermine the informal learning it aims to support.

Another important risk is the assumption of psychological safety. A format designed as a safe space is not always experienced as one. Psychological safety must be actively co-created by participants, and it requires awareness from both employees and facilitators, especially around how dynamics shift in group settings and the presence of leadership.

To mitigate these risks, the format was intentionally designed to be low-barrier, voluntary, and supported, but not controlled, by the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team. Leadership endorsement and light facilitation during early sessions help build legitimacy and contribute to psychological safety. Finally, the CoP is positioned as a complement to formal training rather than a replacement, which helps clarify its value without creating tension in the existing learning structure.

6.2 Performance Specification Fulfilment

The table below summarizes the extent to which the intervention meets the performance specifications. Some elements are fully achieved, others require ongoing support and adaptation. This balance reflects the nature of the CoP as an evolving, living structure rather than a one-time solution.

	Performance Specification	Was it fulfilled?	Evidence
1	**Foster Relevance and Self-Direction**	Yes	CoP topics are chosen by participants; format allows role-specific input.
2	**Enable Informal Learning through Team Learning**	Yes	Small peer groups encourage spontaneous exchange and reflection.
3	**Support Visibility Without Pressure**	Partially	Digital journal enables storytelling, but long-term culture shift still needed.

Table 04: Performance Specification Fulfilment

6.3 Evaluation According to Paul Hawken

To evaluate the intervention through a regenerative lens (i.e., one that prioritizes life-affirming, future-oriented, and systemic contributions), I selected six of Paul Hawken's twelve questions. These offer an ethical and ecological lens to assess the CoP's long-term impact.

Does it create more life or reduce it?

1   Create ———————|—————————————————————— **Reduce**

The CoP encourages relationships, reflection, and exchange, all of which are forms of social vitality.
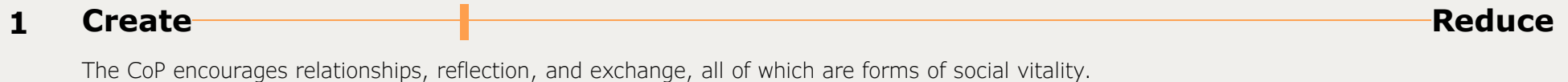
Does it enhance human well-being or diminish it?

2   Enhance ——|———————————————————————————— **Diminish**

The CoP creates psychological safety, fostering dialogue and curiosity, it enhances employee well-being and agency.
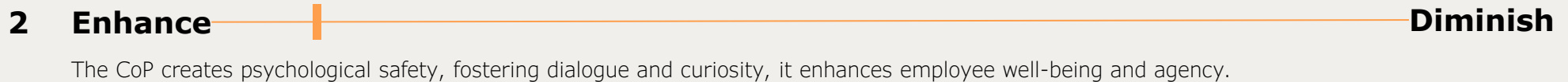
Does it provide workers with dignity or demean them?

3   Provide ————|——————————————————————————— **Demean**

The CoP values lived experience and invites contribution beyond hierarchy or formal roles.
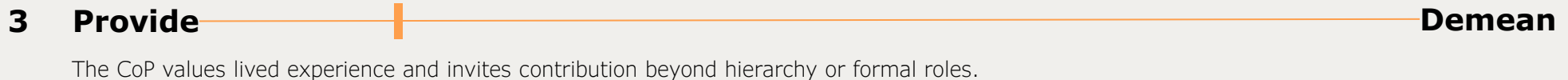
Table 05: Evaluation According to Paul Hawken

Does it serve human needs or manufacture human wants?

4   **Serve** —————————————|————————————————————— **Manufacture**

     The CoP does not create new demands. It responds to an existing learning need.

Does it promote fundamental human rights or deny them?

5   **Promote** ———|—————————————————————————— **Deny**

     The voluntary nature of the CoP respects autonomy and diversity of participation, while its informal structure avoids coercive or exclusionary practices.

Does it heal the future or steal the future?

6   **Heal** ——————————————|———————————————— **Steal**

     The CoP fosters habits of shared reflection and co-creation, it supports the kind of long-term adaptability needed in future-facing systems.

Table 05: Evaluation According to Paul Hawken

6.4. Economic Viability

The CoP is a low-cost, high-value intervention. It does not require new infrastructure or platforms and relies on existing resources such as employee time, digital tools, and voluntary facilitation. Because it leverages informal rhythms like peer exchange and Lunch & Learn formats, its financial cost is minimal.

The main investment is cultural: **it requires leadership to recognize informal learning as strategic.** In return, the CoP supports engagement, knowledge sharing, and organizational adaptability — all of which carry long-term economic benefits that exceed the limited short-term time investment required.

6.5 Implementation Plan

Since I am already working within the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team (CKLT) at Victorinox, I see an opportunity to carry this project forward in practice.

	Phase	Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Notes
1	**Pilot Launch**	Form first CoP group (4–5 people) in the Marketing department.	Project initiator / CKLT	Q3 2025	Use existing employee interest to initiate a low-threshold pilot.
2	**First Cycle**	Run 3 sessions (monthly or bi-weekly) to explore rhythm and fit.	Peer facilitator / CKLT	Q3-Q4 2025	Use lightweight structure and feedback to adapt as needed.
3	**Reflection Loop**	Gather informal feedback with group reflection.	CKLT with participants	End Q4 2025	Supports iteration and visibility without formal KPIs.

Table 06: Implementation Plan

4	**Cultural Anchoring**	Share key learnings during a monthly update or internal newsletter.	CoP participants	Q1 2026	Builds informal recognition and connects learning to existing culture.
5	**Broader Rollout**	Invite additional departments to experiment with the format.	CKLT / Interested leads	Q2-Q3 2026	Growth depends on cultural fit and voluntary engagement.

Table 06: Implementation Plan

6.6. What the Evaluation Reveals

The evaluation shows that the CoP offers a relevant, regenerative, and adaptive intervention for strengthening the learning culture at Victorinox. It aligns with employee needs, builds on existing cultural assets, and enables informal learning through social connection. Its success relies not on rigid structure, but on trust, visibility, and the ability to evolve. Rather than presenting a fixed solution, the CoP provides a living framework that creates space for collaboration, reflection, and adaptation, key capacities for any organization seeking to grow sustainably in an ever-changing world.

Final Thoughts on the Project

7. Final Conclusion

7. Final Conclusion

This project set out to explore how learning opportunities beyond formal structures can better reflect employees' everyday learning needs and strengthen the learning culture at Victorinox.

The guiding research question was:

What learning opportunities beyond formal structures can better reflect employees' everyday learning needs and contribute to a stronger learning culture at Victorinox?

The work began by identifying a gap between formal learning structures and how learning actually takes place in everyday work. While the learning platform provides structured content aligned with business needs, it often misses the informal, socially embedded learning that happens through reflection, peer exchange, and problem-solving.

Insights from literature and field research confirmed that most learning happens informally. The 70-20-10 model, employee interviews, and workplace observations highlighted the value of relevance, trust, and dialogue. However, these informal learning experiences were not fully recognized or supported by the existing system.

To respond to this, the project proposed a CoP as an intervention. Designed as a low-barrier, peer-led format, the CoP encourages shared learning, relevance, and psychological safety. It is not a training session, but a flexible space where learning emerges through dialogue and collaboration.

The CoP builds on cultural strengths already present at Victorinox, such as Lunch & Learn sessions, and offers a way to make everyday learning more visible and intentional. Rather than replacing formal learning opportunities, it complements them by addressing needs that arise in real-time, embedded in daily work.

Iterative testing shaped the intervention's final form: small group size, voluntary participation, rotating facilitation, and informal documentation through a shared journal. These adjustments make the intervention more realistic and long-lasting, ensuring it fits employees' everyday work lives. Support from the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team and leadership is key to its success.

The evaluation plan shows that the CoP fulfills most performance specifications and aligns with Paul Hawken's regenerative lens. It is low-cost, uses existing infrastructure, and offers long-term cultural value. More importantly, it creates a space for dialogue, curiosity, and collaboration, core elements of a thriving learning culture.

In conclusion, this project highlights that cultivating a learning culture requires more than offering formal learning opportunities. It involves rethinking how learning is understood, supported, and experienced in everyday work. The CoP is not a final answer, but a starting point for enabling deeper, more participatory learning practices at Victorinox.

By focusing on relevance, trust, and shared ownership, this intervention opens the door to a more adaptive approach to learning, one that grows with people, not apart from them.

How I Grew with the Project

8. My Learning Journey

8.1. Reflecting on the Project

8. My Learning Journey

The black line traces how my understanding evolved over time. It thickens as I gained clarity, confidence, and insight. Not just by moving forward, but by revisiting and reframing earlier ideas. Learning did not happen in a linear way. It unfolded through loops and iterations: moments of doubt, reflection, and reframing.

My learning journey from a 3D perspective illustrates a non-linear movement. A reminder that learning is not a fixed path, but a living process.
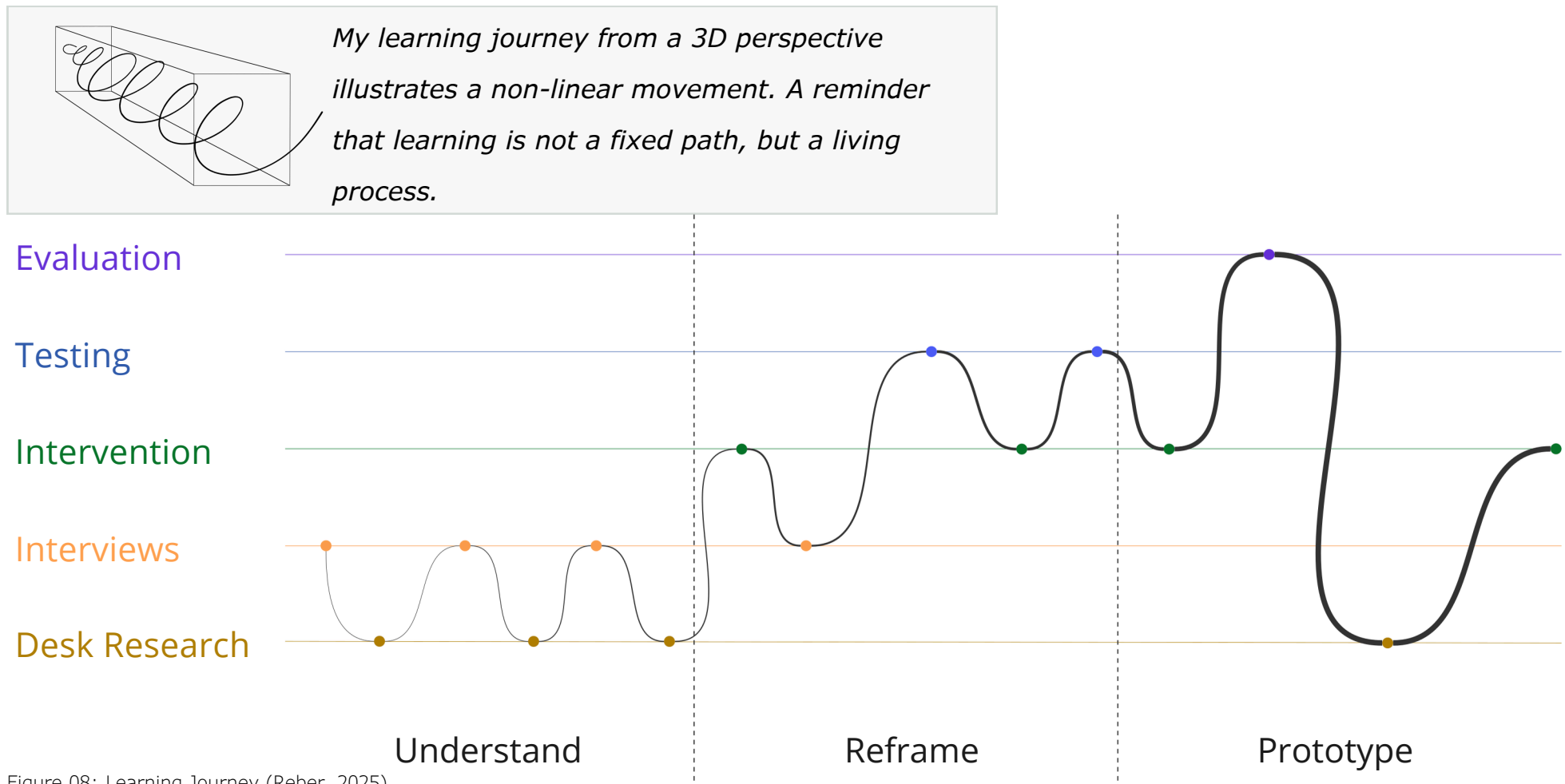
Figure 08: Learning Journey (Reber, 2025)

8.1. Reflecting on the Project

Throughout this project, I have grown personally and professionally — not only as a designer, but as someone navigating complexity with more patience, openness, and clarity. The most significant shift was learning to see a project not as a linear process but as a living system that requires ongoing observation, reflection, and adaptation. I moved from simply trying to "solve" a problem to learning how to stay with the problem longer, observe its depth, and co-design within its context.

At the beginning, I was unsure where to start. I felt pressure to match the quality of other students' work and doubted my skills, especially in literature research and in mapping. But as I moved forward, I learned to trust the process. Weekly reflection helped me navigate uncertainty and brought attention to small but important shifts in thinking. For example, I initially assumed that learning could be isolated as a topic. But through interviews and observation, I began to understand that learning is deeply embedded in work culture and cannot be separated from it.

Another major growth point was around stakeholder collaboration. I learned to manage relationships with both respect and clarity. At times, I was too informal, which created blurred lines. Over time, I developed a stronger sense of how to maintain professionalism while remaining authentic. These relationships were central to the project's success. I no longer saw interviews as data collection alone, but as co-learning spaces.

My understanding of organizational learning also evolved. Initially, I thought the main challenge was getting employees to use the platform. But I later realized that relevance, time, and recognition were far more important than access to content. I learned to question assumptions, my own and others', and began to recognize informal learning as not only valid, but powerful. That insight became central to my intervention.

Throughout this journey, I also developed new competencies. I became more confident in research synthesis and creating low-threshold interventions. I learned to write with more clarity and intention, using language that is both professional and easy to understand. I gained more resilience, especially in facing ambiguity, reframing challenges, and iterating under time pressure.

Perhaps most importantly, I let go of the idea that I had to have all the answers. Instead, I focused on listening, observing, and designing something that could grow beyond me. The CoP is not a finished solution, and that is exactly what makes it valuable. It reflects the mindset I have come to adopt: regenerative, adaptive, and grounded in the everyday realities of people's work lives.

In short, I leave this project not only with a proposal, but with a deeper understanding of learning as a practice, a culture, and a mindset I now carry forward.

9. List of References

- Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. Administrative Science Quarterly, 44(2), 350–383.
- Engeström, Y. (1987). Learning by Expanding: An Activity-Theoretical Approach to Developmental Research. Orienta-Konsultit.
- Eraut, M. (2004). Informal learning in the workplace. Studies in Continuing Education, 26(2), 247–273.
- Garvin, D. A. (2000). Learning in Action: A Guide to Putting the Learning Organization to Work. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Garvin, D. A., Edmondson, A. C., & Gino, F. (2008). Is Yours a Learning Organization? Harvard Business Review, 86(3), 109–116.
- Janićijević, N. (2015). Impact of Organizational Culture on Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management.
- Lombardo, M. M., & Eichinger, R. W. (1996). The Career Architect Development Planner. Lominger Limited, Inc.
- Marquardt, J. M. (2002). Building the Learning Organization: Mastering the 5 Elements for Corporate Learning (2nd Edition). Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Marsick, V. J., & Watkins, K. E. (1990). Informal and Incidental Learning in the Workplace. Routledge.
- Merrill, M. D. (2002). First principles of instruction. Educational Technology Research and Development, 50(3), 43–59.
- Muratovski, G. (2021). Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice. SAGE Publications.
- Reinhardt, F. L., Casadesus-Masanell, R., & Hyun, J. K. (2010). Patagonia (Nos. 711–020). Harvard Business School.
- Senge, P. M. (1990). The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. Currency Doubleday.

- Stappers, P. J., & Sanders, E. B.-N. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. Taylor & Francis, 4(1), 5–18.

- Victorinox. (n.d.). Geschichte. Victorinox. https://www.victorinox.com/de-CH/Alles-%C3%BCber-Victorinox/Geschichte/cms/history/

- Wenger-Trayner, É. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity (18th printing). Cambridge University Press.

10. Appendix

Appendix A: Findings and Key Quotes

Category	Theme	Findings	Data Insights	Quotes
				P = Participants from Victorinox E = Experts EO = Ethnographic Observation
Learning	Employees view on Learning	Learning is employees responsibility.	Employees have annual working hours.	**P1:** "...it's up to me so I can organize it myself and I could always say to myself that I'll do it from 4 to 5 on Fridays, I could do that...." **P2:** "...We actually manage ourselves, so we have annual working hours and projects that we simply have to do and tasks that we simply have to complete..." **P3:** "If I have a course I want to attend, I can do that..." **P5:** "It's not the case that you're somehow told to take so much time out of your week or day to train yourself or whatever and then it's really up to you.It's everyone's own responsibility..."
		People prefer to learn at their own pace and when its most relevant to their needs.		**P2:** "...The format, but also the topic, i.e. whether it interests me personally. I learn much better if it really interests me..." "...If it's something that I can really use in my day-to-day work afterwards..." **P4:** "I think for many people it's really just the time factor or the overload, let's say, that you can't really block out much time from your day-to-day business to learn something just like that, so I think if you do, then you really have to have a need and a specific question that you couldn't solve now without continuing to deal with the topic..." **P5:** "...I find the program really exciting because we're not just learning, but also networking, you get to meet people and other departments that you might not have been able to get in touch with, and even from that, conversations develop afterwards, where you can learn from each other again..." **E1:** "...But when it comes to skills, I don't go, I don't sign up for a two-day training course at some school, but I need the knowledge when I have time to acquire it and when it is useful to me.."
		Learning is included in annual goals, serving as an incentive for employees.		**P5:** "That's included as a goal, but also as an incentive for me to say yes, I'll pick something and I'll take the time and even be rewarded for it with my goal, so to speak" **P6:** "On the one hand, of course, I want employees to make their own decisions. Yes, I want to develop further here, that's even a goodie, that's one reason why I'm staying with Victorinox"
		Learning is situational and context-driven.		**P1:** "...Apart from that, I always enjoyed studying on the train during my studies. I think it's still a good atmosphere to some extent..." **P2:** "...when it's a bit low time, when there's not so much to do, of course..." **P3:** "...when there is more peace and quiet, i.e. when I'm working from home and the projects aren't ultra stressful..." "...Home office, yes. Late in the evening in the office, when the day is actually already over, all meetings over..." **E1:** "...Learning takes place when we deal with the problem..."
	Learning Conditions	Collaborative learning enhances engagement.	The Lunch & Learn sessions (Training Session during Lunch) are almost fully booked.	**P2:** "...So if it's a situation where several people are involved, then maybe you learn together and say OK, now the situation has happened. How can we find a solution together? How can we proceed? And then you also learn from it?..." **P3:** "...Talking to friends & colleagues; explaining a problem or something you've learned to someone else..."
		Promoting a topic throughout the organization is a annual goal of some employees.		**P4:** "...many have this as an annual goal, which is linked to their annual goals. They have to promote some topic in the organization and a building block to make this known would be a Carl training and they have to work this out with us..."
		People want to learn about different topics.		**E1:** "Learning takes place when we deal with the problem..." "...Learning must be customized and occur at specific points..." **P1:** "...We work a lot in an agile way, i.e. within the Scrum framework, and I would like to move more towards mobile leadership there..." **P3:** "Software engineering Pedagogy (i.e. how do I help other people to learn) Management & Leadership" **P4:** "I think for many people it's really just the time factor or the overload, let's say, that you can't really block out much time from your day-to-day business to learn something just like that, so I think if you do, then you really have to have a need and a specific question that you couldn't solve now without continuing to deal with the topic." **P5:** "I've kind of slipped into this change communication why? I've always done it a bit over the last few years and have now taught myself a lot in the last few months, but that's still my goal now, that I can put the tick behind it with a certificate or whatever this year."
	General about Learning	There are different understandings of what learning is.		**P1:** "For me, learning means development. It is extremely important to me that I can develop myself further almost every day and learn something somewhere..." **P2:** "...I think learning is always something that motivates you to keep going..." **P3:** "...For me, learning is the process in which the conscious "I", the thinking "I", deals with a new thing and then, after enough time and repetition, it is stored in the automatic, unconscious "I"...." **P5:** "I live by the principle of learning by doing..."
		For non-work-realted topics HR has to reach out to the CKLT.		**P4:** "...on-work related is also very much a part of employee development and because we are not in HR, but in marketing, we cannot control this process where we say OK, we are making an offer for I don't know how employees to deal better with fears or something, so it is very it really has to have a business need for us to become active and otherwise such offers would have to come from HR..."
		Employees are able to design their own learning journeys.		**P5:** "...We have our continuous employee dialogs, KMD as we call them, where we actually set our annual targets and also have pulse checks in between, where we really take another look. So on the one hand, how are we feeling? How is our performance at the moment, how do we feel? Are we overworked, underworked, where such issues can also be addressed openly with the line manager. You can take another look at the targets and see what is perhaps going well or do you notice that you are moving to a different directorate?..."
Organizational Culture		The organisational culture fosters an open and honest dialogue.		**P5:** "When I think of our corporate culture, I also think of our corporate values, which include courage, trust, responsibility, openness and modesty. I also see these values very strongly in our work culture. As far as courage is concerned, we are all encouraged as employees to do new things, to bring in new input."
		There is no dedicated time for learning.		**P1:** "...it's up to me so I can organize it myself and I could always say to myself that I'll do it from 4 to 5 on Fridays, I could do that...." **P2:** "...We actually manage ourselves, so we have annual working hours and projects that we simply have to do and tasks that we simply have to complete..." **P3:** "If I have a course I want to attend, I can do that..." **P5:** "It's not the case that you're somehow told to take so much time out of your week or day to train yourself or whatever and then it's really up to you.It's everyone's own responsibility..."

Table 07: Summary of Research Findings and Key Quotes

		Personal development is the responsibility of the supervisor.		**P4:** *"...personal development is the responsibility of the respective supervisor, yes, and if you have a good supervisor, then on the one hand you set an example, but you also have the freedom to look for certain offers yourself, which may now also be external from Victorinox..."*
		Sub-cultures influence the importance of Learning in a Team.		**P3:** *"...It's very important, but it's not taken seriously…"* **P5:** *"...It's already quite a big topic for us…"*
Barriers and Challenges	**Barriers to Learning**			
		Time and workload are the main barriers for learning.		**P1: "***Yes, I think everyone's working day is very, sometimes very hectic and very, very packed and if there is somehow the question between finding an appointment with 3 other people or leaving the time blocked for training, for example, that comes up, the priority is usually on the other and on finding the appointment and that, I think, is the main problem..."* **P2:** *"...because then I just don't have the time, because most of the time, someone says it's an hour, an hour and a half, and that's far too long…"* **P5:** *"...I would say it's mostly the time, the resources, you always try to make time to do it, but then the daily business or something unforeseen comes up again, then you have to postpone it again and it's never forgotten, but sometimes it just gets put off a bit too long..."*
	Other Challenges	There are different categories of skills which the courses teach employees. However, there is no clear definition for these skills.		**P4:** *"...It grew very organically in the sense that we simply started with some courses. I think the project management course was one of the first. And then you had to somehow provide the support in this navigation..."*
		Employees are not able to network naturally due to spatial restrictions.		**P4:** *"...if I want to do another workshop or network with people, it's a bit difficult because the offices are so spread out across Ibach that you don't really bump into each other or have the opportunity, let me tell you, you always have to actively approach people...* *...It would be ideal if the whole thing happened a bit more organically, so that people could network automatically because they meet each other more often."* **EO:** There is one main building and several other offices where employees are situated. Some departments do not sit together in one space.
Learning Platform	**About the Learning Platform**	Courses are created based on a business need.		**P4:** *"...we only develop training courses that have a specific need from the business, i.e. a specialist department comes to us and says I need training on antitrust law for Microsoft Teams, so it's like reactive not proactive in that sense…"*
		The learning platform emerged from the idea to have a centralized tool for product training.		**P4:** *"It came from the idea that we somehow needed product training. Because of all the launches we have every quarter, we wanted everyone to have access to the same information and to be able to do so as interactively and self-directed as possible, so not that someone would always have to travel from store to store to present the latest bag knife, but why a kind of self-service library, but somehow nicely prepared and interactive, so it wouldn't have been enough to just send out a training PDF..."*
		The potential of the learning platform became evident after using it as a tool for product training.		**P4:** *"It came from the idea that we somehow needed product training. Because of all the launches we have every quarter, we wanted everyone to have access to the same information and to be able to do so as interactively and self-directed as possible, so not that someone would always have to travel from store to store to present the latest bag knife, but why a kind of self-service library, but somehow nicely prepared and interactive, so it wouldn't have been enough to just send out a training PDF for example, and I think that's how it was born and then you kind of realized yes, you can do much, much more with it than just product training...""*
	Usage of the Learning Platform	The learning platform is an important onboarding tool for employees.	There are 15 courses that are mandatory for new employees.	**P2:** *"I used it a lot at the beginning, especially for various courses that we had to complete when we had the introduction…"* **P5:** *"When I started, of course, that was the thing for me… That was very, very, very helpful to really get started…"* **EO:** The learning platform serves as a knowledge base of the organization.
		The learning platform is used wherever possible.		**P1:** *"...I always use the Carl platform wherever possible…"* **P3:** *"...when there is more peace and quiet, i.e. when I'm working from home and the projects aren't ultra stressful, so it's definitely a quick turnaround after every deadline. So it's almost more when you have a hole that you then say, I don't feel like starting the project yet, but I still have to work today, fine, then I'll just do it, then I'll just do a Carl training course...."*
		The learning platform serves as a tool for refreshing knowledge.	Every course (completed or not) can be accessed.	**P5:** *"...I can always go back in and look something up, so I actually use it quite regularly..."* **P2:** *"...It was super cool that there were courses like that. It's also cool that you can always check back if you forget something or that everything is in a simplified way..."*
	View on Learning Opportunities	Learning opportunities are viewed positively by employees.		**P1:** *"...I think the training platform is a very good thing. Especially if you want to learn things yourself about products or technical or personal knowledge..."* **P2:** *"...It was super cool that there were courses like that. It's also cool that you can always check back if you forget something or that everything is in a simplified way..."* **P3:** *"...CARL and Lunch & Learns are a good thing..."*
		The idea of dedicated time for learning is promoted by the CKLT. However, HR believes that everyone has to be able to do decide for themselves.		**P4:** *"...For us, that would perhaps mean that you could take 30 to 35 minutes every 2 to 3 weeks, I think she said. Yes, HR then gave me the feedback that yes, learning time is something we don't really specify, because everyone has to be able to decide for themselves what they want to learn..."*
		The learning platform cannot accompany all needs to employees.	The 25 most completed course are mostly for onboarding or product courses.	**P4:** *"I think for many people it's really just the time factor or the overload, let's say, that you can't really block out much time from your day-to-day business to learn something just like that, so I think if you do, then you really have to have a need and a specific question that you couldn't solve now without continuing to deal with the topic.* *So you need the facts or the use case in your work and I think we sometimes don't have that with the topics that we have on the platform, simply because there is so much general knowledge for many, so it's just the basics that you have to have, but yes, certain things just go beyond that, we just can't map them on the platform."*
Corporate Knowledge & Learning Team	**Structures**	The Corporate Knowledge & Learning Team aims to foster a positive Learning Culture.	One of the goals of the Corporate Knowledge & Learning Team is to foster a positive Learning Culture.	**P4: "***...What I also think would be ideal, of course, is if people were super motivated and open to trying out new things...* *...That there would also be a kind of trial and error zone where you can simply test things without it having a huge impact on a specific project or something."* **P6:** *"But I see much more than just a learning platform and I presented this as a vision to the outside world. E-learning is one thing, but it's really about seeing the bigger picture. Seeing the bigger picture, because I'm very much convinced that it's a kind of competitive advantage for a company like Victorinox if we give employees the opportunity to develop further..."* **EO:** They want that more people use the learning platform.
		The annual goals of the head of CKLT are the department goals.	The grey text is adjusted due to confidentiality reasons.	**P4:** *"We already have departmental goals, it's currently the case that the head of the Corporate Knowledge & Learning Team sets the goals for herself with the CMO and these goals are then the departmental goals, so to speak, and she then assigns us certain sub-projects that contribute to her goals. This means that if we achieve our goals, she also achieves her goals and then it all works...."*
		The CKLT does not have the capacity to go beyond basic courses.		**P4:** *"...We can only cover the basic knowledge with the online courses, but everything that goes beyond that requires an on-site measure and we don't currently have the capacity for that or would have to buy in experts...."*

Table 07: Summary of Research Findings and Key Quotes

Cecilia Reber l Graduation Project l HSLU DFK Design Management International l May 2025

Appendix B: Interview Guide
Marketing Department Employees

Purpose:

This interview guide was used to explore how marketing employees at Victorinox perceive and experience learning in their everyday work. The questions aim to surface personal motivations, current practices, perceived challenges, and opportunities for supporting a stronger learning culture.

Opening:

Thank you for taking the time to support my bachelor project.
 Before we begin, could you briefly describe your role and responsibilities?

Questions:

Motivation and Personal Perspective

- What motivates you to do the work you do?
- What gives you purpose in your role?

Understanding Learning

- What does learning mean to you personally?
- How important is learning in your team?
- How is learning talked about or communicated internally?

Learning in Everyday Work

- How do you integrate learning into your daily work routine?
- How do you use the learning platform provided by Victorinox?
- What motivates you to keep learning or developing professionally?

Challenges and Needs

- What challenges do you face when trying to learn at work?
- In what ways does Victorinox support your learning and development?
- Are there specific skills or knowledge you would like to develop in the future?
- Are there times or places where you find learning easier (e.g., home office, less busy periods)?
- Do you get time to learn during your workday? How is this discussed with your manager?

Experience with Voluntary Learning Formats

- Have you participated in any voluntary learning formats like Lunch & Learn?
  - If yes, why did you take part?
  - How did you find the experience?

Hopes and Suggestions

- What would you wish for when it comes to learning at work?
- Is there anything you would improve about the current learning opportunities?

Closing

- Is there anything we haven't covered that you think is important?

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team

Purpose:

This guide was used to understand the perspective of the Corporate Knowledge & Learning Team at Victorinox. It explores the team's origin, strategy, definitions of learning, challenges, and their vision for the future of learning within the organization.

Opening:

To begin, I'd love to hear a bit about the origin and development of the Corporate Knowledge & Learning Team. Feel free to share the background story, and I'll ask follow-up questions as we go.

Questions:

Motivation and Perspective

- What motivates you to work in this role?
- What drew you to the field of workplace learning?

Defining Learning

- How do you define learning in an organizational context?
- Why is voluntary learning important in your view?
- What does "successful learning" mean to you?

Challenges and Misconceptions

- What are some common challenges or misconceptions about learning at work?

Decision-Making and Strategy

- Who makes decisions about learning in the company?
- How is the learning strategy communicated across the organization?

Learning Culture and Long-Term Vision

- What does your ideal learning culture at Victorinox look like?
- What long-term goals is your team working toward?
- How does your own team learn and develop?

Current Offerings and Participation

- What voluntary learning formats or opportunities currently exist?
- How can employees actively contribute to shaping learning content?

Closing

- Is there anything else you feel is important that we haven't discussed?

Appendix D: Interview Guide
Experts

Purpose

This semi-structured interview guide was used to gather insights from external experts in Learning & Development. The goal was to better understand organizational learning practices, challenges, and future trends from a practitioner's perspective. The following structure was used in conversations with experts such as Senior L&D professionals from companies like Deloitte.

Note: The guide was slightly adapted for each expert based on their role and area of expertise. While the core themes remained consistent, specific questions or emphasis varied to ensure relevance and depth in each conversation.

Introduction and Context

Hello, my name is Cecilia, and I'm a Design Management student at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. I'm currently working on my bachelor's thesis in collaboration with Victorinox, focusing on strengthening informal and everyday learning within organizations.

My project is still in the research phase, and I'm gathering expert insights to better understand current challenges and emerging approaches in corporate learning. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

Before we start, do you have any questions or concerns about the interview?

Questions

Personal Motivation

- Why do you do what you do? What drives you in your work?

Role & Responsibilities

- What are your key responsibilities at your organization related to learning and development?

Defining Learning

- How would you define learning in the context of your work?

Importance of Learning

- Why is learning important for organizations today?

Encouraging Learning

- How does your organization (e.g., Deloitte) support ongoing learning among employees?

Challenges & Solutions

- What are some of the main challenges you've encountered in implementing learning initiatives, and how have you addressed them?

Evolution of Corporate Learning

- From your perspective, how has learning and development changed over the past years?

Innovative Practices

- Can you share an example of a project or initiative that reflects an innovative approach to learning at your organization?

Final Reflection

- Is there anything we haven't discussed that you think is important for me to understand in the context of organizational learning?

Appendix E: Thematic Analysis

CKLT

CKLT emphasizes the importance of high-quality learning, viewing it as a competitive advantage.

Employees must have an incentive to learn.

Topics such as employee interviews gain popularity on the learning platform, reflecting specific needs or intrests.

Employees are not able to network naturally due to spatial restrictions.

The learning culture should embrace trial and error and allow testing ideas.

The learning platform cannot accompany all needs to employees.

Employees are cautious about new interventions.

Time and workload are the main barriers for learning.

There is no dedicated time for learning.

Some managers do not think that the learning platform is of value.

Many questions could be resolved by using the learning platform.

There are different learning needs

Employees

Learning is included in annual goals, serving as an incentive for employees.

The organisational culture fosters an open and honest dialogue.

Employees are able to design their own learning journeys.

Learning is a personal and evolving process, with each individual adopting different approaches based on their needs and preferences.

Learning helps to be adaptable

The learning platform is an important onboarding tool for employees

The learning platform is used wherever possible

Learning opportunities are viewed positively by employees.

Collaborative Learning Enhances Engagement

The organisation culture is supportive.

The organizational culture promotes unity and ongoing communication.

Employees feel a strong hierarchy.

There are different understandings of what learning is

Workload is a barrier to learning

Training on the platform is too long for some employees

Victorinox supports the learning journey of its employees

Employees are aware of the learning opportunities.

Workload is a barrier to learning

Learning is employees responsibility

The organisational culture feels like a family.

Employees see appreciation

There are many learning opportunites but engagement and perception of its value vary

Sub-cultures influence the motivation to learn

Interruptions are a challenge to effective learning

The learning platform serves as a tool for refreshing knowledge.

work tasks are prioritized over using the learning platform

Quiet environments support focused learning

Learning Can Occur Anywhere

Learning is Situational and Context-Driven

Learning is Integrated with Work Tasks

Experts

Learning is an ongoing process

AI solutions can help to make tailor learning to individual needs

skill development happens through practical engagement and firsthand experience.

People prefer to learn at their own pace and when its most relevant to their needs

Rewards should be based not just on performance, but also on qualifications and skill development.

Creating a pull culture where employees actively seek knowledge turns learning into a tool for achieving specific goals, rather than an end in itself.

Learning needs to be tailored to specific needs

Learning is an investment

Learning

Employees must have an incentive to learn.

Learning is included in annual goals, serving as an incentive for employees.

Collaborative Learning Enhances Engagement

There are different understandings of what learning is

Learning Can Occur Anywhere

Learning is Situational and Context-Driven

Learning is Integrated with Work Tasks

Interruptions are a challenge to effective learning

Quiet environments support focused learning

Employees are able to design their own learning journeys.

Learning is a personal and evolving process, with each individual adopting different approaches based on their needs and preferences.

Learning helps to be adaptable

skill development happens through practical engagement and firsthand experience.

People prefer to learn at their own pace and when its most relevant to their needs

Learning is an ongoing process

Learning is an investment

Learning is employees responsibility

There is no dedicated time for learning.

There are different learning needs

Organisation and Culutre

The organisational culutre fosters an open and honest dialogue.

The organizational culture promotes unity and ongoing communication.

Employees feel a strong hierarchy.

The organisational culture feels like a family.

Employees see appreciation

Learning needs to be tailored to specific needs

The learning culture should embrace trial and error and allow testing ideas.

The organisation culture is supportive.

Victorinox supports the learning journey of its employees

Sub-cultures influence the motivation to learn

Rewards should be based not just on performance, but also on qualifications and skill development.

Creating a pull culture where employees actively seek knowledge turns learning into a tool for achieving specific goals, rather than an end in itself.

Employees are cautious about new interventions.

Some managers do not think that the learning platform is of value.

Challenges

work tasks are prioritized over using the learning platform

Workload is a barrier to learning

Workload is a barrier to learning

Time and workload are the main barriers for learning.

Employees are not able to network naturally due to spatial restrictions.

Learning Platform

Training on the platform is too long for some employees

There are many learning opportunites but engagement and perception of its value vary

The learning platform serves as a tool for refreshing knowledge.

Employees are aware of the learning opportunities.

The learning platform cannot accompany all needs to employees.

The learning platform is an important onboarding tool for employees

The learning platform is used wherever possible

Learning opportunities are viewed positively by employees.

Many questions could be resolved by using the learning platform.

Topics such as employee interviews gain popularity on the learning platform, reflecting specific needs or intrests.

AI

AI solutions can help to make tailor learning to individual needs

CKLT

CKLT emphasizes the importance of high-quality learning, viewing it as a competitive advantage.

Employee View on Learning

- Employees must have an incentive to learn.
- Learning is employees responsibility
- People prefer to learn at their own pace and when its most relevant to their needs
- Learning Can Occur Anywhere
- Employees are cautious about new interventions.
- Learning is a personal and evolving process, with each individual adopting different approaches based on their needs and preferences.
- Learning is included in annual goals, serving as an incentive for employees.
- Learning is Situational and Context-Driven
- Employees are aware of the learning opportunities.
- There are different learning needs

Learning Conditions

- Collaborative Learning Enhances Engagement
- skill development happens through practical engagement and firsthand experience.
- Promoting a topic throughout the organization is a annual goal of some employees.
- Quiet environments support focused learning
- Learning needs to be tailored to specific needs

Organisational View on Learning

- Learning is an investment
- Learning is Integrated with Work Tasks
- Some managers do not think that the learning platform is of value.
- Learning is an ongoing process
- Learning helps to be adaptable

General about Learning

- Rewards should be based not just on performance, but also on qualifications and skill development.
- There are different understandings of what learning is
- For non-work-realted topics HR has to reach out to the CKLT.

Organisational Culture

- The organisational cculutre fosters an open and honest dialogue.
- The organizational culture promotes unity and ongoing communication.
- Employees feel a strong hierarchy.
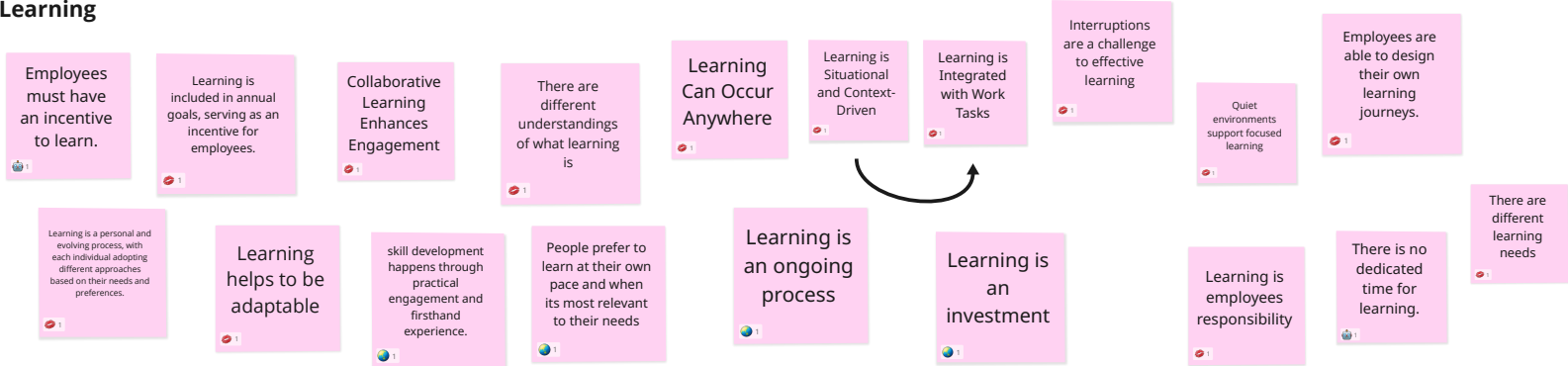- The organisational culture feels like a family.
- Creating a pull culture where employees actively seek knowledge turns learning into a tool for achieving specific goals, rather than an end in itself.
- There is no dedicated time for learning.
- Personal development is the responsibility of the respective supervisor.
- The organisation culture is supportive.
- The organisation supports the learning journey of its employees
- Sub-cultures influence the motivation to learn
- The learning culture should embrace trial and error and allow testing ideas.
- Employees are able to design their own learning journeys.

Barriers to learning

- work tasks are prioritized over using the learning platform
- Workload is a barrier to learning
- Time and workload are the main barriers for learning.

Challenges when Learning

- Interruptions are a challenge to effective learning

Other Challenges

- Employees are not able to network naturally due to spatial restrictions.
- There are different categories of skills which the courses teach employees. However, there is no clear definition for these skills.

Usage of the Learning Platform

- The learning platform is an important onboarding tool for employees
- The learning platform is used wherever possible
- Training on the platform is too long for some employees
- Topics such as employee interviews gain popularity on the learning platform, reflecting specific needs or intersts.
- Many questions could be resolved by using the learning platform.
- The learning platform serves as a tool for refreshing knowledge.

View on Learning Opportunities

- Learning opportunities are viewed positively by employees.
- The learning platform cannot accompany all needs to employees.
- There are many learning opportunites but engagement and perception of its value vary
- The idea of dedicated time for learning is promoted by the CKLT. However, HR believes that everyone has to be able do decide for themselves.

About the Learning Platform

- Courses are created based on a business need.
- The learning platform emerged from the idea to have a centralized tool for product training.
- The potential of the learning platform became evident after using it as a tool for product training.

Incorporation of AI

- AI solutions can help to make tailor learning to individual needs

Role of the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team

- CKLT emphasizes the importance of high-quality learning, viewing it as a competitive advantage.

Structures of the Corporate Knowledge and Learning Team

- The annual goals of the head of CKLT are the department goals.
- The CKLT does not have the capacity to go beyond basic courses.

Appendix F: Testing Documentation

Worum geht's?

Im Rahmen meiner Arbeit habe ich untersucht, **warum die Lernplattform CARL nicht stärker genutzt wird.** Anfangs schien es, als fehle es einfach an Zeit.

Doch die eigentlichen Herausforderungen liegen tiefer:

- Die Inhalte sind nicht für alle relevant.
- Lernen geschieht meist dann, wenn es gerade gebraucht wird.
- Und: Der grösste Teil des Lernens findet nicht in Kursen, sondern im Arbeitsalltag und im Austausch mit Kolleg:innen statt.

Ein Blick in die Theorie bestätigt das:

Das 70-20-10 Modell

70 %
On-the-job experience

20 %
Social Learning

10 %
Formal Learning

- 70 % des Lernens erfolgt durch Erfahrungen am Arbeitsplatz, durch Aufgaben und das Lösen von Problemen.

- 20 % entstehen durch den Austausch mit anderen, z. B. durch Coaching, Feedback oder Peer-Learning.

- 10 % des Lernens findet durch formale Weiterbildung statt, z. B. in Kursen oder Trainings.

Die Plattform konzentriert sich aktuell stark auf die 10 % – also formale Kurse. Doch das ist nur ein kleiner Teil dessen, wie Menschen tatsächlich lernen.

Gerade bei begrenzter Zeit und Kapazität ist es wichtig, Lernen dort zu fördern, wo es natürlicherweise stattfindet: im Arbeitsfluss und durch kollegialen Austausch.

Deshalb braucht es ergänzende Lernformate, die informelles und soziales Lernen stärken.

Die Idee: Best Prepared Circles

Selbstorganisierte Lunch & Learns

Was genau heisst das?

Es gibt viele Themen, die Mitarbeitende bewegen – etwa:

- Neue Tools, Methoden oder Trends (z. B. Design Thinking, KI im Marketing)
- Best Practices und Learnings aus Projekten

In den Best Prepared Circles **tauschen sich Mitarbeitende regelmässig zu einem selbstgewählten Thema aus,** reflektieren gemeinsam Herausforderungen aus der Praxis und bauen Wissen auf. Die Themen richten sich nach den Interessen der Gruppe und dem jeweiligen Kontext.

Generated with ChatGPT

11. Affidavit

I, Cecilia Reber, hereby certify that the attached Graduation Project, Learning Beyond the Platform, consisting of 5998 words as defined in the DMI Graduation Project Thesis Guidelines, is entirely my own and that I have indicated all sources (printed, electronic, personal, etc.) that have been consulted.

Any sections quoted from these sources are clearly declared and indicated, and the sources are explicitly given. I further declare that I have included an acknowledgment of the name of any person consulted in the composition of the final Graduation Project. Unless explicitly stated, no parts of this work have been published before submission.

Lucerne, 22nd of May 2025

C. Reber

Cecilia Reber