

## Principles of Management (BUS 125) Homework Assignment

"Peter M. Senge (1947- ) was named a 'Strategist of the Century' by the *Journal of Business Strategy*, one of 24 men and women who have 'had the greatest impact on the way we conduct business today' (September/October 1999).

"While he has studied how firms and organizations develop adaptive capabilities for many years at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), it was Peter Senge's 1990 book *The Fifth Discipline* that brought him firmly into the limelight and popularized the concept of the 'learning organization.' Since its publication, more than a million copies have been sold and in 1997, *Harvard Business Review* identified it as one of the seminal management books of the past 75 years.

"According to Peter Senge, learning organizations are

...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

The basic rationale for such organizations is that in situations of rapid change only those that are flexible, adaptive and productive will excel. For this to happen, it is argued, organizations need to 'discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at *all* levels.'

### **Assignment:**

Go to the Web and find information about Systems Thinking and the Learning Organization. One place to start is <http://www.solonline.org/>

Write a short (less than 200 words each) definition of Systems Thinking (in Senge's context) and Learning Organizations.

List the five "Core Disciplines" Senge identifies in his theory of the Learning Organization and write a one-to-two sentence definition of each.

List the three roles that Senge says a Leader must assume in a Learning Organization and write a one-to-two sentence description of each.

Although they are considered cutting-edge, there are several reasons why Senge's theories have not been embraced and implemented in the international business community. Choose one reason and write a short (less than 300 words) statement to explain and defend your position.