



Brandon Hall Group
**EXCELLENCE
AT WORK**

Interview

with **Bob Szostak**,
Director of Business Development
Vertex

Connecting Learning to Doing



About Vertex

Vertex Professional Services (VPS) is a global provider of managed learning solutions for commercial, government and military customers. Vertex creates enduring learning solutions that work with its clients' ecosystems, infrastructures and budgets. Formerly known as Raytheon Professional Services, Vertex's DNA lies in applying sophisticated tools and methodologies, and creating data-driven, innovative learning solutions to accelerate people and business performance.



Recognition

A Brandon Hall Group Silver Preferred Provider, Vertex Professional Services won three Brandon Hall Group HCM Excellence Awards in 2022.

EXCELLENCE IN HCM AWARDS



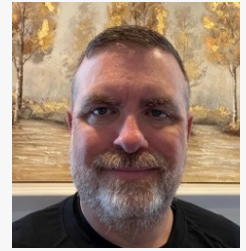
Learning and Development

2 Gold Awards | 1 Bronze Award

The Brandon Hall Group Preferred Provider Program is specifically designed as a single source of truth that can validate your technology selection decisions.

[Learn More](#)

About Bob Szostak



For the past 25 years, **Bob Szostak** has worked with commercial, government and military organizations to transform client and business needs into the design, development and implementation of practical and innovative learning solutions. With client partners, he designed and delivered enduring learning solutions reaching more than one million learners annually. A Certified Professional Training Manager (CPTM), Bob leads client relationships, and solution development and market presence for Vertex Professional Services (VPS).



About Rachel Cooke

Rachel Cooke is Brandon Hall Group's Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.

RACHEL

What are the similarities and differences between “learning into doing” and “learning while doing”?

BOB

It’s the difference between learning as a separate event versus learning that’s integrated into the flow of work. One of the better examples of that is if we need to learn how to fix something, we pull up a video and use that as a go-to or job aid to help us. “Learning while doing” is the formal integration of that concept into the flow of work at the point of need so it’s relevant and contextual.

RACHEL

What are some challenges to the modern learning organization despite (or because of) technological advances and learning options?

BOB

Some of the most significant challenges we’re involve folks seeking a panacea or one-size-fits-all solution. Organizations are different, learning ecosystems are different, and technical infrastructure is different. The challenge is finding the right type of solution that fits your organization, your infrastructure and your budget. There are a lot of great products and services out there that work if you subscribe or implement them or add them to your elements but not everyone has the capability to do that. Likewise, there’s a lot of focus on what’s flashy and the high-end type of things that may exceed the use case for what the organization is looking to fulfill or meet your business objectives or the learning objectives tied to those business objectives. The challenge is getting down to that analysis of what’s needed and what’s required to get things done that work within your budget, your infrastructure and your system.

RACHEL

How do you embed learning more effectively into the flow of work?

A

BOB

It all goes back to your upfront analysis; what are the business objectives you're trying to accomplish, what are the learning objectives that tie into accomplishing those business objectives and the constraints that you have to work within to accomplish that? Many times we see requests for proposals that have a solution set in mind but they haven't done that upfront work. When you get into questioning and it's, "Well, we can't work within the solutions you're putting forward because we have these constraints that weren't realized upfront."

We've seen recently where folks are looking for virtual reality or metaverse solutions because those are the big sexy words and what's flashy. They may work perfectly fine, but these are costly types of solutions that satisfy very specific use cases. In many instances, you can accomplish the same results or even better by embedding simple animation into interactive PDFs or work instructions, or make video snippets available at the point of use. We don't have to create a separate solution that uses the highest end available.

Q

RACHEL

How do high-performing organizations approach learning measurement?

A

BOB

In high-performing organizations, 73% use learning metrics tied to business outcomes. They have that direct link and began with the end in mind up front and tied those things together. The type of things that we're talking about here — whether it's AR, VR, embedded videos, iPDFs — they're not just focused on learning while doing. Those high-performing organizations also had a very different level of measurement of engagement with their employees than other organizations. That was the 62-28% differential. It shows the difference between the types of organizations, as measured in a recent Brandon Hall Group survey, and in our experience as well.



It starts up front, doing the proper analysis to determine what those metrics and measurements are going to be and ensuring they're integrated into the learning itself so you can make those ties relatively easy at the end of the day.

The business case for change usually involves some financial stakeholders as well as agreeing upon how ROI will be calculated. That's a significant difference from a while back when we could say, "Well, this is how many people took training, so it should have these effects."

(continued)

That was good enough but now we need to show that it did have additional throughput, it did reduce warranty costs, it did reduce the cost of throwing parts at a system versus fixing things, it did drive efficiency and people working transactions had X-percent moving this much to the bottom line of that department or organization. The biggest change here is an integration with the business beyond the typical learning unit. Learning is not learning for learning's sake; we don't operate in a vacuum any longer. We've asked for a seat at the table and now we have to play with everyone who is there and their specific interests.

to think that learning practitioners are becoming more and more learning scientists and we have to design the type of studies and the data integrity to show the solutions and the evidence of solutions and the progress we need for the business. It's just a little change in focus.

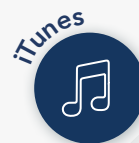
Q **RACHEL**

Can you describe how learning professionals can make the business case for change to organizational stakeholders?

Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:

A **BOB**

A lot of advice I offer is about that upfront piece and taking the time to understand the business measures and the needs of your stakeholders and the buy-in that's going to be acquired. There's an equal piece that's part of the process that gets into the why or how. Do you know these are the issues, these are the measures? These are the things that are going to prove more effective. I like



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications

Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership

Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Advisory Offerings

Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards

Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

SOME WAYS
WE CAN HELP

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.