

# The Balanced Scorecard: A Learning Perspective

[www.shaughnessyhowell.com](http://www.shaughnessyhowell.com)

When Robert S. Kaplan and David Norton introduced the balanced scorecard in 1992, they defined a way of measuring a company's activities in terms of its vision and strategies. In doing this, they introduced the need to focus not only on financial outcomes but also on the human issues that drive those outcomes. Since then, organizations have become a field of theory and research on the role of learning within the balanced scorecard framework.

*"The balanced scorecard is the focus on attempting to capture information about how well the organization is positioned to perform in the future."*

## Learning as a key perspective

For decades companies have used key measurements to take the pulse of an organization. What's different with the balanced scorecard is the focus on attempting to capture information about how well the organization is positioned to perform in the future. As well, the financial areas most commonly measured are broadened to include other perspectives such as learning. The balanced scorecard suggest developing metrics, collecting data and analyzing it relative to four perspectives:

1. financial perspective
2. customer perspective
3. business process perspective
4. learning and growth perspective

In order to apply a balanced scorecard approach to the learning and growth perspective, organizations are developing metrics that measure their success in areas such as technical skills development, continuous learning and knowledge continuity.

## A broader view of learning

Organizations have realized that learning is more than training. They have broadened their understanding of learning to include the development of corporate culture, the strength of knowledge management, the importance of focusing training funds and the inherent value of informal networks. Most of all they have learned to align learning initiatives to business objectives and make profound changes to those that do not fit.

Whether or not an organization adopts the methodology of the balanced scorecard, they can definitely benefit from what organizations have learned about clarifying a vision for learning and translating this into action.

