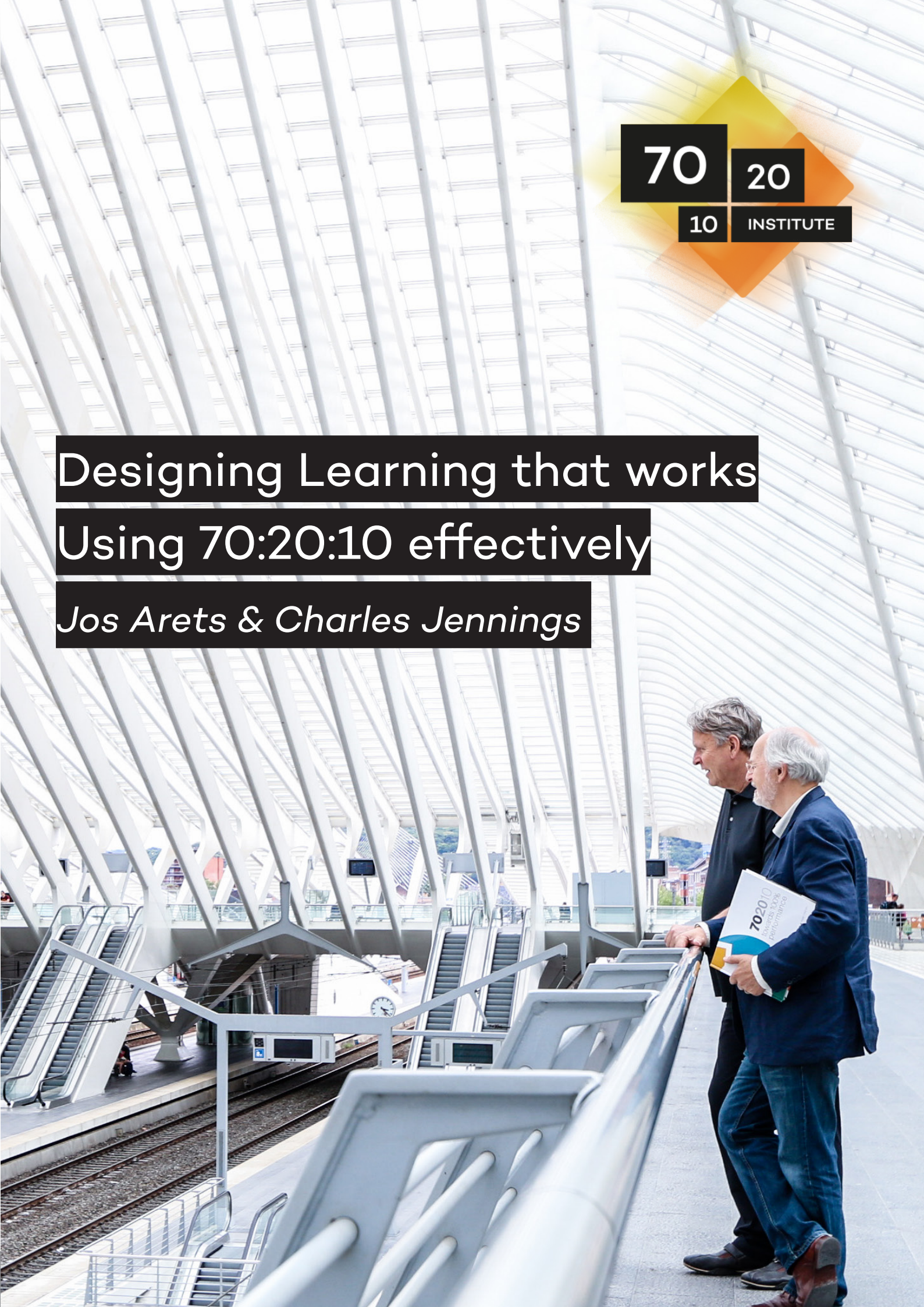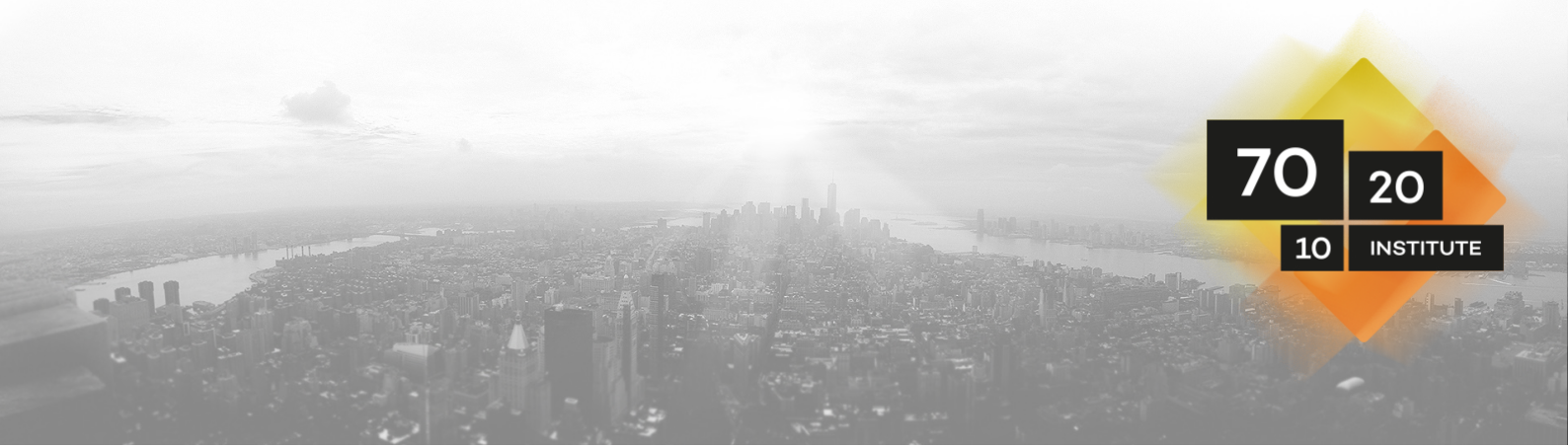# Designing Learning that works
# Using 70:20:10 effectively

*Jos Arets & Charles Jennings*

## Index

## The 70:20:10 Framework

### Competency Models For Learning And Development In Organisations

More and more businesses are adopting 70:20:10 to help build organizational strength. However, a question often posed is whether the approach is a theory of workplace learning, a way of cutting down on training costs, or a mantra to be followed slavishly.

Alternatively, is 70:20:10 simply 'old wine in new bottles' given that most Learning and Development (L&D) professionals think they already combine learning and work?

Some ask 'why bother with 70:20:10 at all'?

Additionally, 'what is it with this neat formula - 70, 20, 10'? People are suspicious of nice round numbers. Surely the reality of learning and performing is much too complex to be described in terms of simple ratios?

Despite all these criticisms, there's a worldwide movement of L&D professionals who realize and acknowledge the value of 70:20:10.

This is not because it's a mantra, an ideology or an end in itself, but because it enables them to connect more quickly and effectively to what really matters: learning and performing at the speed of business. Their work isn't just about providing formal learning solutions. By using 70:20:10 as a reference model, more and more L&D professionals are co-creating solutions with their business colleagues.

This 'movement' and new way of working with 70:20:10 makes L&D more relevant to their organizations.

### Competency Models For Learning And Development

When examining the potential of 70:20:10, the starting point for our thinking should be the question:

## "Is it possible to improve the performance of people and organizations by using this reference model?"

On the first view, this may not seem an original question. People have been trying for decades to measure the return and business impact of various L&D approaches. However, we know that a positive return and business impact will never be achieved simply by offering a catalogue of formal training and eLearning solutions, so it makes sense to think about other ways in which L&D can add value for organizations.

We argue this is possible by using 70:20:10 as a framework for action, and by designing an optimal mix of formal and informal solutions align with this model.

70:20:10 describes the way high performers achieve their levels as being roughly 70 parts learning through learning by working, roughly 20 parts through learning from and with colleagues and others, and roughly 10 parts through formal learning and other formal processes.

A key factor to consider is that 70:20:10 requires a change in mindset for L&D. Instead of relying solely on learning to achieve business results, it shifts the emphasis towards performing for business results. It highlights the original purpose of the HR and L&D professions, which is to help people and organizations to do their jobs better.

This doesn't happen on its own. This major shift also requires HR and L&D professionals to apply new sets of roles and tasks if a change is to happen.

## The need for new roles

The current roles in most L&D functions are primarily educational and focused on designing, developing and delivering formal learning or development solutions (the '10').

To deliver effective 70:20:10 outputs, L&D teams will be required to take on totally new sets of processes, roles, and tasks. These changes are essential to effectively use 70:20:10 principles and support business performance.

The overview of the new roles described here demonstrates how 70:20:10 has the potential to make L&D professionals and their L&D departments more effective in preparing for the future in alignment with business strategy.
In this paper, we focus on the first three roles of our 70:20:10 framework;

the Performance Detective, the Performance Architect, and the Performance Master Builder.

PERFORMANCE DETECTIVE

PERFORMANCE TRACKER

PERFORMANCE ARCHITECT

PERFORMANCE GAME CHANGER

PERFORMANCE MASTER BUILDER
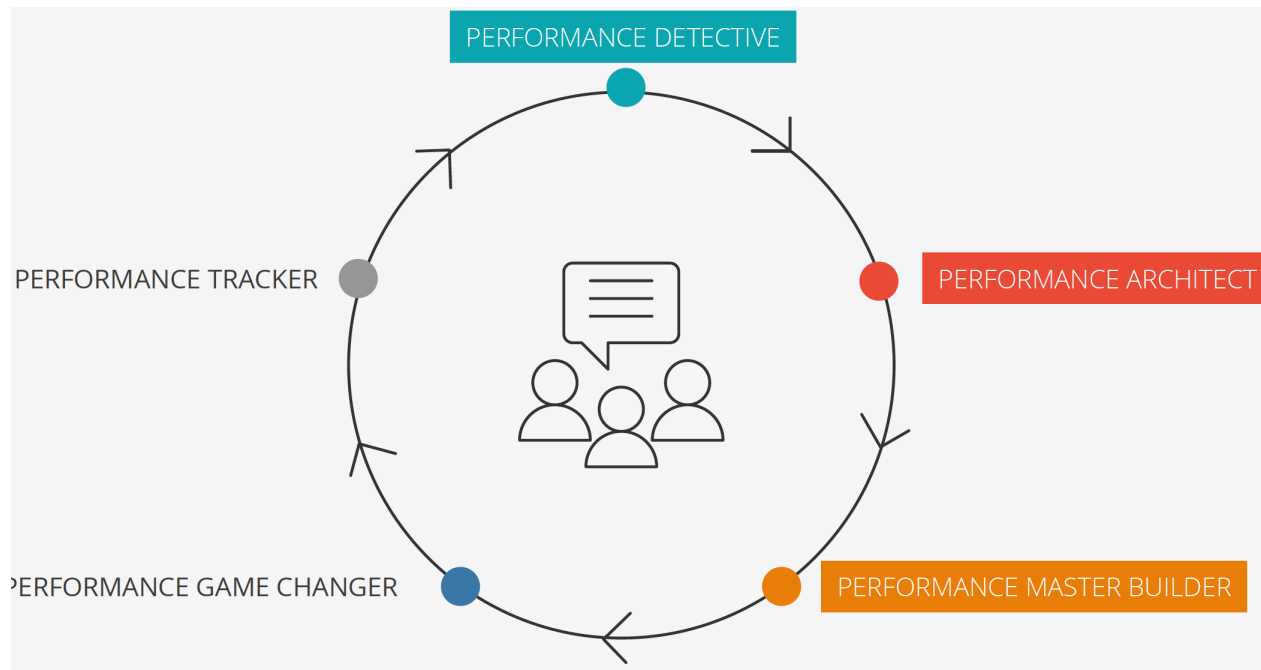
**The Performance Detective:**

## Aligning with the business and organization strategy

The Performance Detective role analyzes performance problems in a systematic way. This involves carrying out business, performance and influence analysis whose outcomes provide the input for the Performance Architect.

**9** Prioritise the influences

**8** List the critical tasks

**7** Map influences in the work environment

**6** Determine the performance gap

**5** Define the desired performance

**4** Define the current performance

**3** Define the core processess

**2** Determine the critical business issue

**1** Obtain key client's commitment

**Performance Detective**

The Performance Detective doesn't analyze training needs. This role analyzes business and performance needs. This is the main reason the role of the Performance Detective is the starting point of the 70:20:10 framework. It is to align L&D focus with the core business.
The work of the Performance Detective is not to identify learning needs, but to enable organizational performance improvement.

*"Human performance improvement is quite simple, though over the years we've made it more complicated than necessary. It is time to uncomplicate the process and teach more managers and L&D professionals the art and science of being a Performance Detective."*

An expert Performance Detective, Dennis Mankin recommends a straightforward set of processes for Performance Detective success:

**The Performance Architect: Designing the 100**

The Performance Architect co-creates prototypes that solve individual and organizational performance problems. He or she 'designs for the 100' using a set of agile principles.
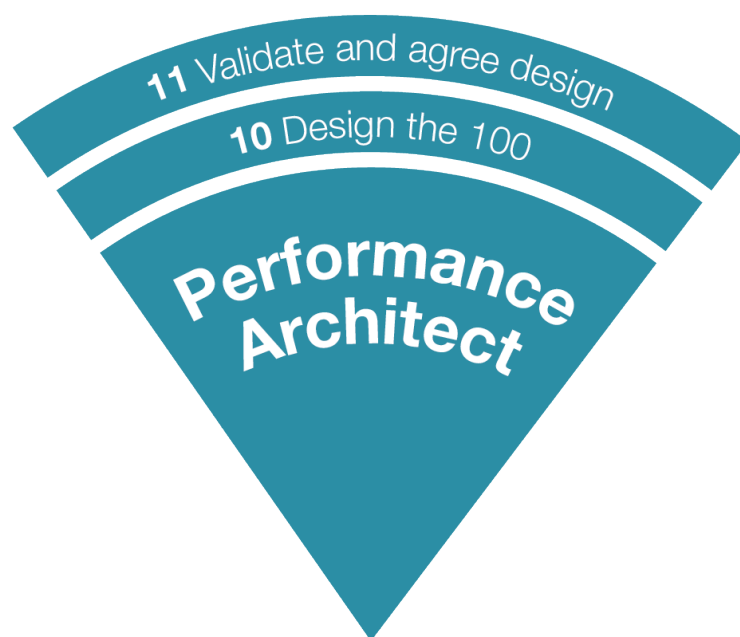
The 70:20:10 design process is a way of creating projects and solutions with business impact that support working and learning in a meaningful and effective way.

This requires thinking from the viewpoint of the whole (the 100) and not from the separate parts (the 70, 20 or 10).

### What is the 100?

The Performance Architect designs the entire 70:20:10 solution. This forms a solid base for a holistic approach and prevents silo thinking within the 10, 20 or 70 or simply solutioneering within the 10.

Designing for the 100 is comparable to an architect designing the framework of the house first and then the details of individual rooms, rather than trying to design each individual room separately and then attempting to fit them all together.

### The Performance Architect: The importance of working in the right order

It is important for the Performance Architect not to fall into the trap of designing and developing the 10 or 20 parts first and then the whole.
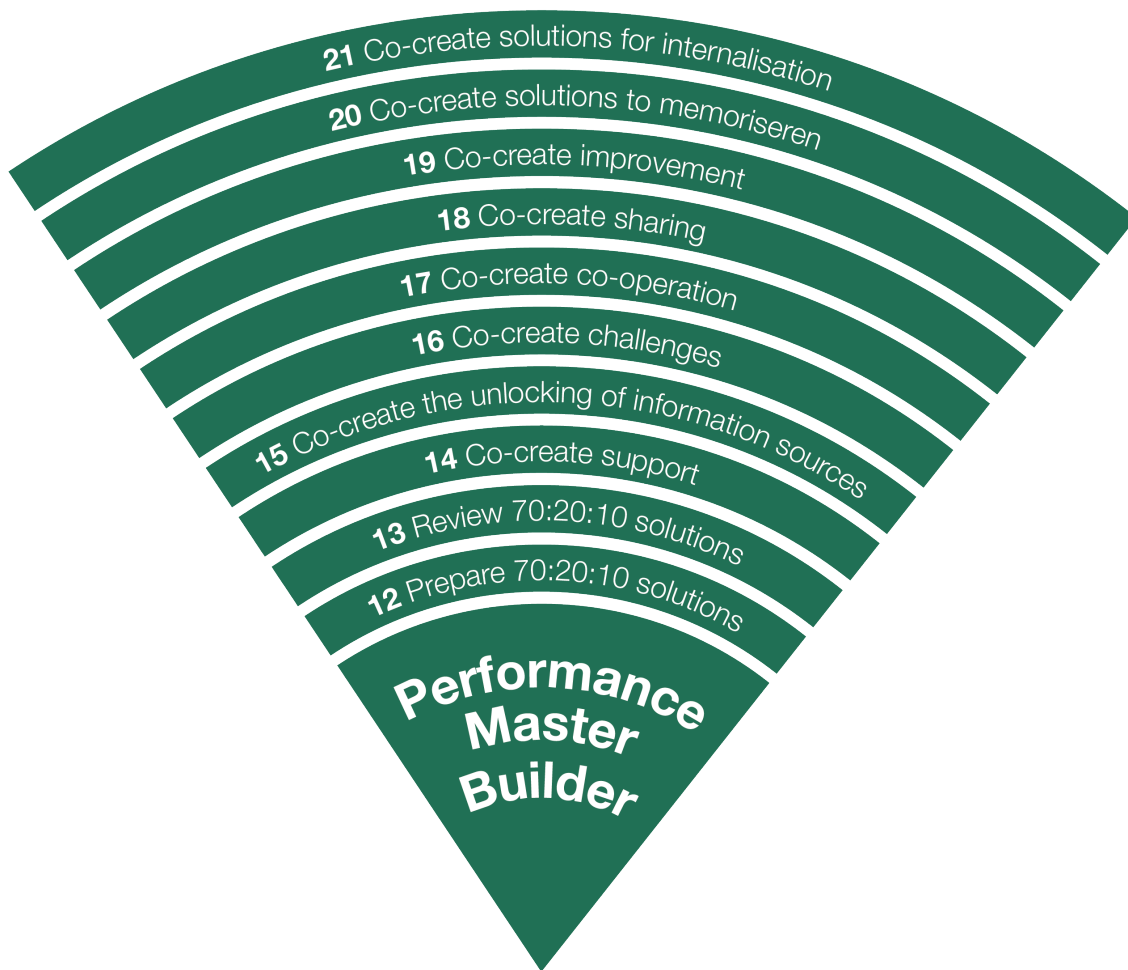
If an architect begins by designing the bathroom and the rest of the house later, then the final structure is likely to be less optimal than if the design is developed holistically.
Working from the 100 gives you a clear picture of the shapes of the 70, 20 and 10 and how they will interlink.

### The Performance Master Builder: The 70 and Performance Support

The Performance Master Builder role uses the critical tasks identified by the Performance Detective as a starting point. The Master Builder then co-creates effective solutions based on the Performance Architect's design.

The Performance Master Builder uses standardized processes and checklists to bring together resources and tasks to achieve an effective, fully developed solution as the outcome.

21 Co-create solutions for internalisation
20 Co-create solutions to memoriseren
19 Co-create improvement
18 Co-create sharing
17 Co-create co-operation
16 Co-create challenges
15 Co-create the unlocking of information sources
14 Co-create support
13 Review 70:20:10 solutions
12 Prepare 70:20:10 solutions

**Performance Master Builder**

**From courses to resources: Online resources for all**

Starting with the 70 provides opportunities to develop alternative solutions to the course catalogue.

Designing the 70 with a mindset focused on resources rather than courses, and with access rather than the need to memorize, results in extending learning services well beyond the 10.

This approach has several advantages:
* Easier scalability
* Increased ability to make flexible, real-time adjustments
* Greater connection to business needs
* Ability to provide easy access to curated content based on reliable, selective and relevant information to support working and learning

The most important difference between a focus on resources and a focus on courses is the emphasis being not primarily on learning, but on performance support closer to the point of need in the workplace.

Resource-based approaches can also make it possible to organise structured certified training more effectively and to support formal learning and improve formal evaluation results.

## The increased focus on tasks

organizations achieve results only when the right tasks are performed in the right way. A task is a set of interrelated activities that make it possible to achieve a predetermined result.

Tasks determine the connection between the desired results, how work is done, how the results are achieved and what performance standards apply. Tasks determine how teams divide up work and seek to achieve quality of output, so they are a logical starting point for designing 70:20:10 solutions.

They are also a means of performance support, which is beneficial to the 70 and enables workplace learning, which is the core of 70:20:10.

## Performance support

If you provide people in the workplace with the knowledge and information they need to do their jobs, will they need training? Gloria Gery answered this rhetorical question in 1991 with an emphatic 'no'. Gery points out that providing knowledge within the workflow leads to fewer mistakes, higher productivity and faster acquisition of skills. However, it has taken decades for the importance of performance support and other workflow-based approaches to be recognized within the L&D world.

## Performance support is not the only way to implement 70:20:10

There is a certain confusion about the role of performance support.

Performance Support is not the only way to support or implement the 70 in 70:20:10. The 70 involves much broader, more holistic, opportunities and approaches.

Challenges such as stretch assignments, opportunities to increase spans of control, apply reflective practices, special assignments and many other actions carried out within the flow of work can also be utilised as part of the 70 within a 70:20:10 solution.

## Performance, not learning

Above all, 70:20:10 is not simply a solution box to support learning.

Using the five new roles in our 70:20:10 approach, and applying new processes and new tasks within those roles, will result in the improvement of performance aligned with organizational strategy and business needs.

This will result in supporting high performance instead of supporting learning.

With 70:20:10, L&D can become capable of demonstrating business value instead of just learning value.

## Authors
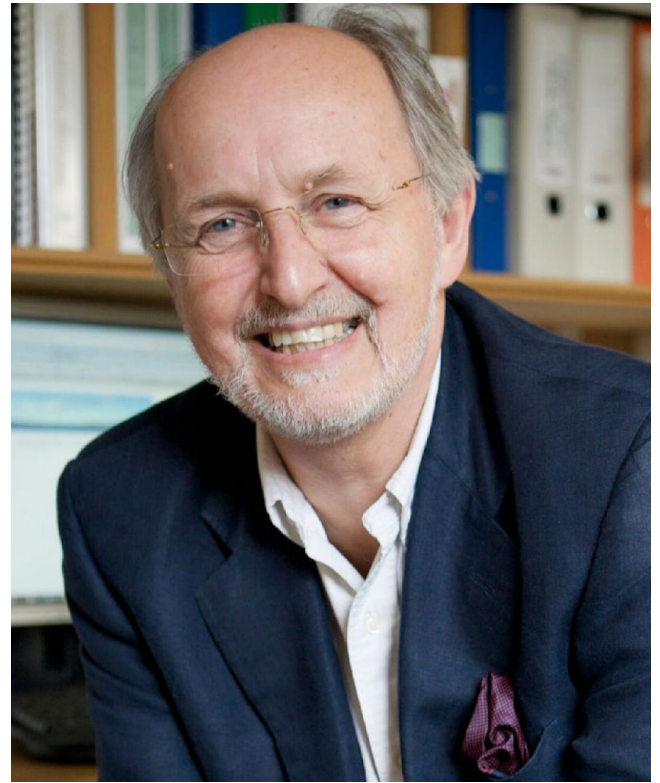
**Jos Arets**

*For many years Jos has worked on improving the performance of people and organisations by connecting working and learning in smart ways. This work has been through a mixture of strategic projects with clients and international collaboration within the L&D community. Jos's strength lies in designing performance driven solution at a systems level and working in the role of a Performance Architect. In collaboration with Charles Jennings and Vivian Heijnen he has published articles and books about learning and performance, measurable performance improvement and about 70:20:10.*
*He is Co-Founder of the 70:20:10 Institute and owner/CEO of Tulser B.V.*

**Charles Jennings**

*Charles is a leading thinker and practitioner the field of building high performance strategies and solutions. He has been working with the 70:20:10 model for more than 15 years and is known worldwide for his work in this area. Charles' background includes roles as Chief Learning Officer for Reuters and Thomson Reuters, as an academic and business school professor, and as a member of advisory boards and steering groups for international learning, performance and business bodies around the world.*
*He is Co-Founder of the 70:20:10 Institute and co-owner of Duntroon Consultants Ltd.*

## The 70:20:10 Institute

The 70:20:10 Institute has been established in response to widespread international demand for information about what the 70:20:10 model involves and how it can be used.

The Institute works collaboratively with organisations across the world. We help exploit the potential of 70:20:10 as a robust approach that strengthens and aligns learning and development (L&D) with organisational performance needs. We are working to create L&D strategies and solutions with performance and (organisational) learning power.

We see 70:20:10 as a movement rather than a solution. It is a movement whose aim is to deploy more effective and efficient approaches for building high performance faster than the speed of business.

The Institute is open, collaborative and inclusive in nature. We partner with businesses that are supporting 70:20:10 and with L&D departments and other parts of organisations that are using 70:20:10. We also partner with experts across the world whose work is leading the way to extend beyond formal learning.

The Institute offers help and support through a 70:20:10 expert programme, publications, and through a set of resources we make available for use by business partners and organisations that are using 70:20:10 to improve learning and performance.

### More information?

For more information about us and our services, please visit:
www.702010institute.com

If you have questions, you can always email us:
info@702010institute.com