

## **PLANNING FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Where do I begin?**

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**Definition:** Professional Development is a broad term that I will use to capture the planning professionals might do for skills and competency building to increase their value to an organization and keep enthused, energized and vibrant during the course of a career.

If you have NOT thought about it recently it is probably because;

- You're doing the job and so busy you have no time to think about developing
- You really have no clue as to what you should think about developing
- No one is giving you any feedback anyway
- This place does not really "grow" people... it sort of suspends them in a time-warp

Hmmmm...Well, consider the up-side of doing diligence on your development plan:

- More control over unforeseen job changes as you grow and expand your talents
- More satisfaction that comes from learning new skills
- More energy that comes from revitalizing areas that match your values and passions

### **Some Tips to Get You Started**

#### **Seek Feedback**

1. Make a list of the goals or expectations that your manager and others have of you for the year. Next to that list, make a sub list of the skills that will be required to do them well. List technical skills, communication skills, project management skills etc. Jot down your thoughts on each skill; such as; "I do this well, this one needs some development ". Be as objective as you can.
2. Your manager continues to be a key figure in observing your performance and ultimately assessing your achievements. Take the lead on arranging informal feedback meetings with him or her to review your list and the current state of your skills as you see it.
3. If you have other colleagues at work who see you in action and can give you honest feedback, seek them out regularly and ask for their support in providing feedback to you in targeted areas.

#### **Know Yourself**

*"If your success is not on your own terms,  
if it looks good to the world but does not feel good in your heart,  
it is not success at all." Anna Quindlen*

What do you love to do? What gives you the greatest satisfaction in the job? IF you could carve out a perfect day in the office, hospital or lab, where would you be and what would you be doing? Most development plans will find a place "on the shelf" if they cannot excite you to build on your strengths and further your desire to have a set of skills and talents that foster your passions. We all have jobs to do and expectations to be met. However, the days are long without nurturing the "spark" in each of us. Do you know what it is? Do you love organizing events or meetings? Do you love to coach or mentor others? Do you love to write, plan or analyze? Write down your thoughts.

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## Think Creatively

1. After assessment, feedback and self-knowledge comes the next challenge. Where do I get the skills? How? The Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC has some interesting data regarding where we really learn:
2. 70% of adult learning happens through on-the-job challenges, taking on higher risk projects and involving yourself in assignments that really stretch you
3. 20% of adult learning comes through mentors, role models, feedback givers and others who coach and give you guidance
4. 10% of adult learning happens in a classroom or other kinds of learning such as books, tapes, e-learning etc.
5. Savvy career managers find opportunities within the organization that provide the desired development and, ultimately, more exposure. Some tips:
  6. Offer to join a project team or task force that will help you develop or otherwise make more connections
  7. Take on a tough assignment, and seek out advice from those who may have worked on it in the past.
  8. Find a mentor (most people are surprisingly willing to do this if asked)
  9. Join a professional group that is most relevant to your passions.
  10. Take a class, or surf the internet regularly on your targeted skill area.

Lastly, I have some resources below of some great books for people interested in developing themselves.

*Love It Don't Leave It* by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans ISBN 1-57675-250-x

*Learning Journeys* by Marshall Goldsmith, Beverly Kaye and Ken Shelton ISBN 0-89106-147-9

*Career Warfare* by David F. D'Alessandro ISBN 0-07-141758-3

*For Your Improvement* by Michael M. Lombardo and Robert W. Eichinger ISBN 0-9655712-2-x

*The Directory for Building Competencies* by Dennis J. Kravetz ISBN 0-927764-00-8

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