

It's a Great Time for Professional Growth and Development

By Randy Goruk

One of the great things about life is that we get to make choices about many things, including our professional growth and development.

We can choose to ignore it. Choose to postpone it. Or choose to consciously proactively create a personal professional growth and development plan.

Think how we enter a new year. We sit down and reflect on the past year and ascertain a few minor changes or improvements are in order. We conclude it's a perfect time to set some new goals. So we do. Our goals usually revolve around diet, finances, relationships, or getting organized. But rarely does our fresh set of goals include anything to do with professional growth and development.

Personal professional growth and development is all about you taking the initiative to improve yourself as a leader. Exactly what that means to you will mean something different to someone else. Only you know the areas you need to improve in to make a better contribution to those that you serve or to those that you work with.

Those that choose to ignore or postpone their professional growth and development are doing themselves, their families, their co-workers and everyone else they touch a tremendous disservice.

It's a great time to get energized and excited about taking your career and professional growth to a higher level. I recommend the following 5-steps to help you get there.

1. Commitment

Improving yourself always takes a commitment. This simply means that you will need to dedicate time on your calendar to work towards achieving your professional goals. To start, I recommend you allocate a minimum of 4 hours per week for professional development. Yes I know you're busy. Your day is full now and you don't know where you'll find the time. But it's important to your future, so take a serious look at how you spend your time and get rid of any time wasting activities now and replace it with professional development.

2. Prioritize

Ask yourself, what 3 areas do I need to improve in the most to make the biggest difference in doing my job and advancing my career?

You should know. If you don't, ask your boss or your co-workers what they would like to see you improve in. Or you could do a self assessment on crucial skills for your position or the position you are targeting for future advancement.

As an example, if you know that the next step up the ladder for you will require a solid understanding of financial statements but this is a weak area for you well you better get to work on it because when that job opens up you'll want to be ready.

Or perhaps you just want to get better at some of the skills of your current job. Become a better listener, improve your delegation skills, improve your time and stress management abilities.

3. Plan

Once you know your professional development priorities, you now need to establish a professional development training plan. Your plan should be in writing and should contain goals ... specific goals.

If a plan and specific goals are critical to the success of a business, then having a professional development plan with specific goals are critical to your success as well.

In your plan you must consider the power of the World Wide Web. You will find articles, blog postings, newsletters, webinars, tele-seminars, advice columns, quizzes, videos, stories and they are all free.

Obviously there are also a ton of books that you can help you. Choosing the right one or a good one is always challenging. Don't try to do it alone, ask others for their book recommendations on your area of interest.

Your plan can include listening to CD's or watching DVD's reading. You can search out local training seminars or workshops. You can also rely on a mentor or a coach to help you.

4. Implementation

Once your plan is in place it's time for you to be serious and dedicated to implementation. It is easy to let your personal professional development plan slide, just like the diet plan. But don't let it happen. Be persistent and hold yourself accountable for achieving your goals. Find ways to keep yourself motivated.

Reward your successes and accomplishments.

5. Repeat

Professional growth and development isn't a onetime event, it's an ongoing lifetime experience ... but only if we choose it.

If we don't care about our own professional growth and development, who will?

Randy Goruk is the founder and President of LeadersEdge360.com, a leadership development firm focused on maximizing personal and professional achievement. For over 30 years, Randy has been known for his compelling and inspiring speaking style, and is masterful in educating audiences in identifying key leadership attributes, the most common leadership mistakes, and specific tactics good leaders and teams can implement immediately to create professional and organizational growth.

Visit Randy's website at <http://www.LeadersEdge360.com> contact him at Randy@LeadersEdge360.com
