

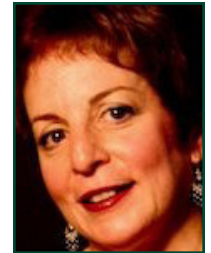
Member's Quarterly

Spring 2020 Edition

Perspective

Continuous Learning: Stay Open and Keep Growing

You're never too busy to expand your horizons



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We know that not all learning has to be done in school. Many of us have also learned the hard way that when we stop learning or being open to learning, we quickly fall behind. That's why it's important to develop an individual program of continuous learning. This is done in several ways, from formal to the very casual way that some people learn new skills today. It can happen in a training room, at a conference or right at your desk. This involves a commitment and some dedication in order to achieve the desired results.

Benefits of Continuous Learning

The many benefits depend on your goals and how much time and energy you are willing to invest. Most top performers are always learning new skills to add to their arsenal. This can help them become more appreciated and better compensated in their current position and also help them get opportunities to move up the corporate ladder.

One key benefit of continuous learning is obtaining and updating professional licenses or certifications. This delivers a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement outside of the workplace. This can also lead to insights and developments that open the door to new opportunities, sometimes in a completely different area. Those who take on volunteer assignments or sit on the executive of their professional associations gain new skills and knowledge to help them move into leadership positions. Not only do you stay fresh and inspired in your current role, but you've gained insights about the competitive marketplace.

Options for Continuous Learning

Formal learning

This may mean taking a sabbatical or education leave to pursue a new degree. It could also be part of a corporate training initiative at work such as attending conferences and workshops away from the office. Much formal training can be taken electronically through different forms of e-learning that can be carried out anywhere there's an Internet connection. Other variations include mobile learning courses and MOOC's which are massive open online courses that have unlimited participation and open access via the web.

Social learning

Social learning refers to how we learn from others. This can be done at work through on the job training or just by listening and interacting with others. We can learn new things and gain information from colleagues and team members on a project or special assignment or just by doing our own research on the Internet. Some other ways to learn through social interaction might be through coaching and mentoring. Here we have a guide to help us navigate through unknown waters and gain confidence and skills to move into a higher leadership position. A coach may offer more personal support while a mentor would help us gain corporate knowledge about our industry or employer.

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Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning is often the most fun way to learn. We can pick and choose what we want to learn and what forum or method to use. Most of us don't have the time or budget to spend 300 hours in a classroom or in front of a computer to obtain a professional designation. Here you can learn and grow at your own pace. Attending industry conferences is another great way to meet industry experts and catch up on the latest trends and developments.

No matter how you decide to learn, stay with it to keep growing and continue on your positive path to success. Check out the spring conferences offered by IPM to help you learn new strategies and expand your own networks. Always keep your continuous learning program alive and growing throughout your career!

Nathaly Pinchuk is Executive Director of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].