

A Professional Development Plan is Essential for Business Leaders

By Ann N. Gatty, Ph.D.

There are some very good reasons why leaders create personal professional development plans for themselves and for their staff. In our current business climate, maintaining a creative edge is essential to stay competitive. As the business world evolves, so should you.

The future is uncertain and for many leaders, solid predictions are elusive. However, futurist, Joel Barker advises the following: “As a leader, your key skill is to get your people to follow you to a place they would not go to by themselves. That ‘place’ is located in the future. Finding that place and leading your team to it is your most important responsibility.”

How does a personal professional development plan help business leaders and their workforce? We suggest there are three important reasons why such a plan allows you to maintain fresh perspectives and keep aligned with current societal needs.

Revisit your sense of purpose.

Customers are more likely to support companies that make a positive difference in people’s lives and consciously invest in the improvement of their communities. To your consumers, such companies are seen as relevant and worth backing. Being socially relevant may change over time as our societal issues change, but leaders must continually assess how the company’s purpose aligns with its core values.

As a leader, your perspectives change over time, and through continuous professional development you can remain clear in how you lead with purpose and relevancy. As Mohammed Ali stated, “A man who views the world the same at fifty as he did at twenty has wasted thirty years of his life.”

Improve your conversation strategies.

How we communicate with our customers is rapidly changing. Consumers are now wiser and often very aware of the actions of your company. Keeping up with changing avenues of communication including the social media outlets, allows you to understand how your customers want to engage with your company.

With the changing business landscape, the ways in which you develop your conversations will be increasingly important to your sustainability and your profit. Challenge and test assumptions, previous methods, and current ways of doing things. Have you learned how to establish a dialogue around accountability with your customers? Visit www.wefirst.com to learn more.

Refine your legacy

“Those following us should benefit because we were here. They should have the opportunity to learn from the missteps, milestones and miracles of our great journey,” according to Debbe Kennedy, CEO of the Leadership Solutions Companies.



How you lead in establishing a lasting legacy is directly related to developing a core message that both your employees and your customers embrace. How you bring your core values to life brings benefits to both your reputation and your employees' productivity. Through the development of a personal professional development plan, you can devise a strategy in which you can lead with purpose, engage your community and develop a lasting legacy.

Continue to be innovative. Think about how emerging trends, public policy changes, business strategic goals and major current events can impact the future development and business growth path of your company. Read your industry's current business advice, enroll in an academic course, hire a coach or participate in industry conferences. But keep learning by following your own personal professional development strategy. In this way, you can maintain your leadership skills in a company, while supporting a cause people care about.

To learn more about how to establish a professional development plan for you or your employees, contact us. We customize strategies to help leaders evolve and maintain that creative edge that benefits both their companies and the communities they serve. We couple our mentoring and coaching with on-the-job projects that fit the situational context of your business. Talk with us. We can be reached at 855-284-4448. Together we can make a positive impact.

About the Author:

Dr. Ann Gatty is a business learning expert. She helps her clients build businesses to work brilliantly. Through a collaborative mentoring process, she and her clients create workable strategic business plans and success initiatives, while improving their workplace processes. She is frequently featured in the media and contributes blog posts for www.AllBusiness.com and www.WomenOnBusiness.com. Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills that they can immediately apply in the workplace. Watch her video series, [Building Businesses to Work Brilliantly](#) for more business strategy tips.