

# MANAGE YOUR OWN CAREER!

10 tools to help active job searchers and engaged employees become creative, innovative and passionate workers

TOOL 10 of 10

▶ CHECK OUT THE  
WORKFORCE  
WINDSORESSEX WEBSITE

▶ FORWARD THIS TOOL TO A  
FRIEND OR CO-WORKER

# Lifelong learning

## Tool Overview

Learning new things is important in terms of keeping up with changing job demands and ensuring that you have the skills you need to be successful in the future. In fact, staying ahead of the curve is the best way to take responsibility for your own employability.

As an **engaged employee** you will look for continuous learning opportunities as a means to develop both personally and professionally. You will look to learning as a way of keeping yourself current, adaptable and ready for any change that may come your way.

## Self-Assessment Quiz

Use this quiz to identify your strengths and pinpoint areas for improvement.

	YES	NO	SOMEWHAT	N/A
1. I am currently involved in some type of formal or informal education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I actively participate in professional development activities in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I seek training opportunities that are above and beyond what is expected in my workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have at least one mentor that I go to for personal and/or professional advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I am available to teach those around me the things I know and do well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Learn How To Learn

**Learn in Groups.** Make learning a fun and social experience. Join a peer group and make it an evening out. Learning in a group setting is a great way to network and gain colleagues.

**Keep Track.** Keep a list of what you want to learn. As you think of things you want to know jot them down so you don't forget. Once you've mastered a new skill check it off the list and move on to the next one.

**Make it a Priority.** Everything is easier when it's a habit. Make a conscious effort to schedule a few minutes each day to devote to learning. This can be as simple as reading the newspaper, enjoying a chapter of a book or participating in an online discussion board.

**Learn on the Job.** Try to find parts of your job that allow you to learn new things. Ask to be cross-trained in a new area or see if you can shadow a co-worker with different responsibilities. If there is no option for learning at work consider volunteering.

## Cause for Excitement!

### Food for Thought

Get excited about every opportunity to learn something new. It's your chance to make your life richer and more interesting. Start learning on the job and there's no telling how far you'll go!



*"The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you." - B.B. King*

**EMPLOYMENT  
ONTARIO**

**workforce**  
WINDSORESSEX  
INVESTED IN A WORLD-CLASS WORKFORCE



## Look to Mentorship

When it comes to lifelong learning, **mentorship** provides a great opportunity to receive valuable advice and guidance from your peers. **Mentor** relationships can be as formal or informal as you want. It can be as simple as grabbing the occasional coffee with a co-worker who can help you in your career.

Surround yourself with people who can benefit you. Don't limit yourself to one mentor. Consider forming a **personal board of directors**. Look for a variety of people that you admire for different reasons. Work on making a connection with each of these people so that you can benefit from an array of experiences.

## Find a mentor who . . .

- knows a lot about **your organization**
- knows a lot about **your industry**
- has a **job you aspire to have**
- has the **knowledge and skills you want**
- has **qualities you admire**
- you consider to be a **great networker**

### THINK ABOUT IT!

*When it comes to mentorship **don't count yourself out!** You have a number of assets that can be shared with others. Be sure to make yourself available to teach your peers the things you know and do well.*

### Consider This . . .

Today's labour market is extremely diverse. Use this to your advantage and learn something new. Make an effort to find a mentor from a **different culture** and/or **generation** and watch how fast you'll grow!

Google this: *mentor relationships*

### Learn at Work!

3 easy steps to assist you when asking your employer for training.

#### Step 1: Speak Up!

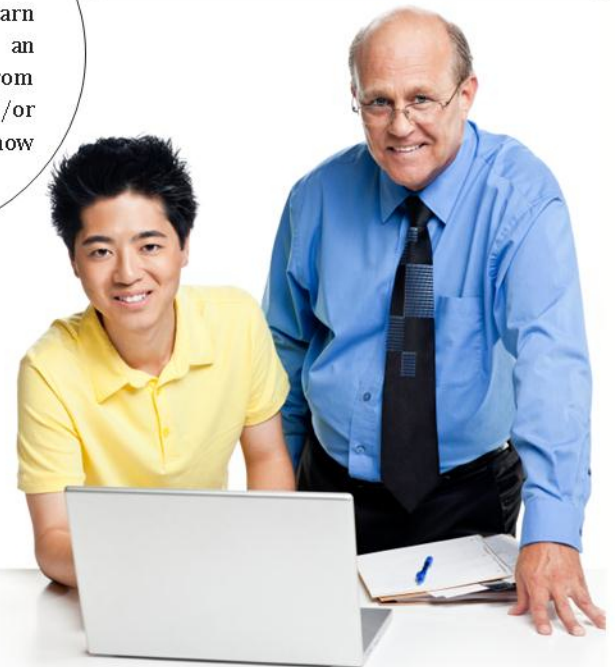
Don't wait for your employer to approach you with training opportunities. Get the conversation started!

#### Step 2: Be Prepared!

Communicate exactly what training opportunities would benefit your work and your future with the company.

#### Step 3: Compromise!

Try to find a way that both you and your employer win. If there is no money in the training budget find cost-free learning opportunities that you can participate in at work.



## YOUR OPTIONS ARE ENDLESS . . .

....Coaching.....Peer Groups.....Cross-Training.....Formal Education....Trade Shows.....  
....Mentoring....Conferences....Workshops....E-Learning....News Articles....Reading.....  
....Experiential Learning....Webinars....Peer Groups....Seminars....Business Books.....  
....Online Discussion Boards....Cross-training....Lunch and Learns....Volunteering.....  
....Job Shadowing...Guest Speakers....Professional Associations....On-the-job training  
....Experiential Learning....Webinars.....Peer Groups.....Seminars.....Reading Blogs.....  
....Online Discussion Boards....Cross-training....Lunch and Learns....Volunteering.....

## Want more? Check out this great read!

**Learning for Your Life: A Blueprint for Continuous Learning** by Eddy Knasel, John Meed and Anna Rossetti

View it online @ <http://www.amazon.com/Learn-Your-Life-Blueprint-Continuous/dp/product-description/0273649175>

## “To Learn” List

**Instructions:** Use this tool as a checklist to keep track of the all things you want to learn personally and professionally.

### Education & Training:

- Example:** I want to learn intermediate level accounting principles.
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

### Job Related Learning:

- Example:** I want to learn the new accounting software in my department
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

### Personal Learning:

- Example:** I want to learn how to manage my finances electronically
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-



## Quick Tips for Continuous Learning Success

### Stay Current

Learning new things will help you keep up-to-date with what's going on in your workplace, industry and community as a whole. As an **engaged employee** you understand that staying current is key to becoming adaptable and ready for change.

### Prevent Boredom

The more you know the less likely you will get stuck in a rut. As an **engaged employee** you know that learning is a great way to keep your mind busy and provides opportunities to challenge yourself.

### Gain Options

The more knowledge, skills and abilities you have the more prepared you will be to take on the future. As an **engaged employee** you realize that continuous learning is a great way to **recession-proof** yourself and ensure that you are always employable.



### If you find yourself saying . . .

*"I have spent a lot of years in school. I think I've learned enough!"*

You can never learn too much! The more the workplace changes and advances the more you will need to know in order to stay competitive. The truth is, lifelong learning is vital to making the most of what the world has to offer you.

*"I don't have the time or the money to invest in lifelong learning. It's just not possible."*

One of the greatest myths about lifelong learning is that it has to be formal and expensive to be worthwhile. While there is nothing wrong with taking a night class, a weekly trip to the public library can provide an equally rewarding learning experience.

*"I have so many commitments every day. I'll never find time to devote to learning."*

The reality is, learning is something that can be incorporated into your everyday routine. It can be as simple as reading the newspaper over breakfast or asking to be taught a new skill at work. Try not to focus so much on when and where the learning will take place. Instead, take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves throughout the day.

## Great Ways to Keep on Learning

- Read the newspaper every day
- Travel to a new place as often as you can
- Visit the library and read books regularly
- Take up a new hobby in your spare time
- Network and meet new people
- Enroll in a night course
- Read blogs and discussion boards
- Attend conferences and seminars
- Take a training course through your workplace
- Be curious and ask questions

## Key Terms

**Lifelong Learning:** the act of continuously gaining new skills through a variety of activities and experiences

**Mentor:** an individual sought after for knowledge and advice

**Mentorship:** a relationship that exists between two or more individuals for the purpose of obtaining knowledge, guidance and advice

**Personal Board of Directors:** a group of individuals sought after for knowledge and advice with each individual providing a unique set of experiences