

Career Insurance: Avoid becoming obsolete !!!

Staying on top of your career means staying current. It is now up to employees to keep up to date with new trends and developments in your field of expertise, and your industry.

Staying up to date is getting tougher. Companies sometimes give only five to seven years before the knowledge/skills of their professionals to be considerably out of date. The impact of this trend is huge. It means that, over the course of your career, you'll probably need to "unlearn" and "relearn" the skills and knowledge you now depend on three or four times. Knowledge is expanding at a very rapid rate, and knowing what skills to learn and where to learn them is crucial to maintaining employability.

Here are a few tips for staying ahead of the game:

1. Buy career insurance through continuing education

Think "*Training Training Training*". Take at least one course in the next year. Some professions have continuing educational requirements, such as accounting, medicine, computer programming, and law. Even secretaries need to upgrade their skills. Attend at least two conferences in your industry.

2. Invest in networking on the future of your profession

Sign up for free events online or attend industry networking meetings. Watch what's happening in your industry. The companies that have the most merger activity, the technologies that are emerging.

3. Talk to people inside different companies

Some of the best information about new developments in your profession will probably come from the people inside different companies. Invite them to lunch.

4. Analyze changing trends in job responsibilities

Examine employment ads for an idea of how job requirements are changing. Write out a list of key-skills and experience requirements for your job title, and notice how they change.

5. Apply the lessons of other professions to your own

Assume that the global trends will have an impact on your profession, and plan accordingly. For example, computing software eliminated the need for typing pools. What exactly will automation do for your job?

An exercise we do in our Labour Market Information workshops is to take a piece of paper and divide it into five columns.

Column one: What are the trends that are influencing my profession?

Column two: What opportunities does that create for people in my profession?

Column three: What threats to job security do they imply?

Column four: What should I do to best position myself to take advantage of these trends?

Column five: When will I take action (Due date/action to be taken)?

When you think about it, career insurance is a choice we make, not a certain fate. The knowledge and skills expected of professionals in all industries is changing. However, by anticipating what those changes are, and taking action, you can shift the balance from surviving to thriving.

I recently signed up for more training from the Vancouver School Board. For a nominal fee (\$104) I will be spending a few hours a week upgrading my skills in human resource management, adding to my tool-belt of skills to offer employers.

Tips:

Subscribe to some free magazine. Ziff-Davis has many different types of free magazines, and so do many other organizations. Articles on the growth and development of your field are crucial to gaining an understanding of areas to improve on. Industry specific websites are also good sources of up-to-date information on career trends.

Contributions:

I am looking to interview job seekers by phone, e-mail or fax for upcoming articles on job searching. If there is anyone who would like to contribute a few minutes of their time please feel free to call me at 977-5477, or e-mail me at jakes@pepjob.com.