

Professional Self-Development Guide

<http://www.ronhuxley.com>

“A man’s mind stretched by a new idea can never go back to its original dimensions.” Oliver Wendall Holmes Jr.

1. **Decide what you what to achieve:**

- I want to continue in the same job for the next few years.
- I want to move to another organization in the next year.
- I want to be promoted within three years.

Take some time to think and then write down your own mission.
Try to specify a realistic time period as in the above example.

2. **Assess yourself:**

- Now you need to assess yourself. Are you ready and fully equipped to start working towards the achievement of your mission? The fastest way to increase this is to use self-assessment questionnaires, obtain other people’s reactions and feedback on your performance and to look at yourself critically.

3. **Gather information and feedback from supervisor**

4. **Identify some improvement opportunities.**

- Take a closer look at the feedback to identify some improvement opportunities. Some emotionally “neutral areas” may be identified, e.g. improved computer skills, time management, and some hot areas, e.g., you need to listen more etc.,

5. **Establish a partnership with management.**

- Once you have identified your “mission’ and some opportunities for improvement, try to establish a partnership with management.
- Meet your supervisor to discuss: The current needs of the program and how you can enhance your contribution.
- Some personal development goals. Demonstrate that you are prepared to invest your own time and efforts in achieving these.

6. Set yourself some SMART performance goals:

- SMART describes goals that are
- S – Specific in terms of performance with specific activities.
- M – Measurable in terms of results (quality, quantity or standards).
- A - Aligned with or supporting the overall mission, in this case your overall career plan.
- R – Realistic in terms of your capabilities, the time and other resources available.
- T – Tracked and time.

7. Develop personal action plans:

- Activities/actions list the specific things you will do to accomplish the goal.
- How –indicates any points about methods, resource needed or obstacles that need to be overcome.
- When—indicates the expected start date and completion of each activity.

8. Follow the personal action plans:

- Accomplishing any goal is the result of completing numerous smaller tasks that occur over an extended time period. Try to accomplish something every day so that you maintain your momentum and motivation and meet your deadlines you've established.

9. Practice to make the improvement a habit:

- Look for ways to practice the improved skill in more situations and build your confidence and expertise.

10. Communicate your accomplishments:

- Let your management and colleagues know what you've accomplished. If for example your management have provided you with resources and support, you might give them a briefing to demonstrate what you've learned and encourage them to support you further in the future.

(Adapted from: The Staff Development Handbook: Peter Sheal, 1992)