BABSON / EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

How to Supercharge Your Professional Growth with a **LEARNING AGENDA**

A learning agenda is a powerful tool that helps you identify and pursue opportunities to grow your skills and expertise. The pace of change in today's economy makes existing skills obsolete more quickly than ever, creating a learning imperative for continual reinvention and evolution. Instead of waiting for change to catch up with you, you can use a learning agenda to proactively and intentionally grow in the right direction.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

» Step 1. **Clarify the professional or personal goals that matter to you.** Learning is most effective and lasting when it is driven by real opportunities and challenges in your life.

» Step 2. **Identify the skills, experiences, and knowledge you need to achieve each goal.** Do your homework! Talk to colleagues and mentors, review job descriptions, and read online resources to understand what you truly need to achieve the goal.

» Step 3. **Honestly assess whether you currently have each required skill, experience, or piece of knowledge.** Before you dive into learning, it's important to take stock of what existing expertise you can leverage and where you need to focus your development efforts.

GOALS	REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE	DO I CURRENTLY HAVE THIS EXPERTISE?
1. EXAMPLE: **Earn a promotion to Senior Director of Marketing**	Product Marketing Capabilities	YES
	Content Development Experience	NO
	SEO Expertise	NO
2.		
3.		
4.		

» Step 4. **Reframe each skill you lack into a concrete, actionable learning goal**, so that you're operating in a growth mindset instead of focusing on your deficits.

» Step 5. **Think carefully about what concrete steps you can take to reach each learning goal.** Make learning commitments that are specific, actionable, and time bound.

GAPS IN SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE	ACTIONABLE LEARNING GOAL	SPECIFIC LEARNING COMMITMENT	DEADLINE
1. EXAMPLE: **SEO Expertise**	Become competent in the latest SEO technologies and practices and understand how my organization is using them.	I commit to asking our Senior Marketing Director if I can participate in the next SEO launch for a new product.	End of the week
		I commit to reading at least one trade book on SEO.	End of the month
		I commit to asking my sister-in-law how her firm uses SEO.	Sunday
2.			
3.			
4.			

» Step 6. **Instill accountability to make sure you follow through.** Share your learning agenda with a colleague, friend, family member, or mentor who can support you and will ask about your progress. Keep it someplace visible and get into the habit of reviewing it routinely.

» Step 7. **Continually revisit and update your learning agenda.** It should be a living document that evolves as you grow. When your agenda is no longer relevant, re-evaluate your goals and refocus your energies.

While this may seem like a very simple exercise (and it is!), there is immense value in the thought process involved in building your learning agenda and power in the act of recording your intentions and commitments. Pretty soon it will become routine and you will benefit from all that comes with being a lifelong learner!

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