

## **If You Don't Invest in Yourself, Who Will**

by Michael DeVenney

Would you be concerned when reviewing a resume if the last educational accomplishment is a university degree. Is that it?

That's just the beginning!

Gaps in education indicate a lack of growth. My worry is that when you stop learning, you stop investing in your growth and your potential is limited. I do not subscribe to the foolishness that learning what you need when you get there. Ever better – that you needed a break from education. Really! Well, I don't want to tax your mind too much so maybe you aren't right for the position.

Keep learning. Don't stop. Knowledge and applying it to your work is what creates value for an organization. In our knowledge economy, the person who continually builds their skills is increasingly valued. Even better, continuous learners keep building the potential value.

Set an education plan for each year of your career. During the first ten years of your career, it is important to build your industry expertise so about two-thirds of your learning is recommended for technical knowledge. The remaining one third should develop your people skills in leadership, communications, and teamwork. After the ten-year mark, technical and people skills learning should move to a 50:50 mix and then after 20 years, your greatest education focus should be on personal development and leadership.

The web has made it is simple to keep learning. So many on-line programs, certificates, and degrees are available that there is just no excuse for not continuing your development. Check [www.elearners.com](http://www.elearners.com) and see what fits for you.

As well, so much available on a local basis through continuing education offerings from universities and private learning companies, there is just no excuse.

Be clear on where you want to develop, find programs that can develop you in these areas, and do it.

Each year, put together a growth and education plan. Bosses welcome your requests for education – make it strategic, show how it adds value to the organization, and submit your proposal. Bosses want to see initiative. If the money is not there for the organization to cover your education, kick the money in yourself.

If you don't invest in yourself, can you really expect other people to?