



Designing your CPD roadmap – what skills do you need in your professional toolkit?

Some people prefer life on the open road, while others deliberately choose a more strategic path, but in a competitive marketplace it can be useful to collect skills that will help along the way.

Listening skills

Your career success will often depend on your ability to effectively resolve conflict, mediate between team members, and effectively negotiate with colleagues and superiors. Cultivating good active listening skills takes effort and there are a variety of resources available including courses run by the Conflict Resolution Network.

Training skills

Only a very naïve library worker would deny that we have a training role. It might be disguised as user education, assisting a new colleague to learn how to operate a library management system, or introducing a new service or product to your workplace. You will be a more effective trainer if you can clearly identify what needs to be learned, and the best way of learning it. There are some excellent courses available, for example the *Certificate IV Workplace training and assessment*.

Presenting skills

Your ability to convey information clearly and effectively will prove vital in most organisations. There are annual reports and bids for funding to be prepared, managers to impress, community groups to address, storytimes to present, colleagues to persuade, and these situations require the ability to assemble information and present it in an appropriate manner and with confidence. Being able to prepare and present an interesting paper is not the same thing as putting together forty PowerPoint slides! Groups like Toastmasters offer public-speaking training. Presenting a paper at a library conference is a great way to expand your résumé and also your presentation skills.

If public speaking is not your thing consider contributing to our professional literature. The editors of *inCite*, *Scan*, *Orana*, *ALJ*, *APLIS* and other journals are often looking for interesting articles. Good writing skills can help to prepare a press release that sizzles, or a job description that appeals.

Networking skills

Everyone talks about the value of networking — but exactly how do you do it? It is simple. Put your hand up the next time a group calls for volunteers and instantly you are connecting with people. Not everyone you meet will prove to be a useful contact in the short-term but we work in a small industry and networking is a great way to build a professional reputation beyond just the library or agency you are working in while you build up a resource base of people that you can consult when you need professional advice.

Vary your work experience

Some people were born to specialise and there is certainly value in being an expert in your field. It has been my experience, however, that choosing to take on projects outside your area of speciality and deliberately stretching your comfort zone builds a valuable skill base and can open up new opportunities. The scope for cross-team projects varies between organisations but there is always room for an attitude of co-operation in any organisation.

And the rest

There is also value in developing budgeting, supervision, visual merchandising, marketing and keyboarding skills just to name a few. In fact, it is fortunate that lifelong learning is in vogue because there is a whole world of skills and information out there. ■

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is the new *inCite* column giving a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinator, Kate Watson, watsonk@rcc.qld.gov.au.

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