

I can't do that! Wait, yes I can!

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By

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Personal development is a challenge for most of us, but each of us has someone we admire or look up to. As we begin our career, we set goals on what we want to accomplish within our profession but we do not always know how to proceed to accomplish those goals. In recent years there was a popular saying, "I want to be like Mike", referring to professional basketball star Michael Jordan. As we develop our professional career, we all need to find our own "Mike". This session will provide some tips, guidelines and suggestions on how to start developing your personal growth and to reach those professional goals that you have set. Some, but not all the topics to be covered, include: finding a mentor, developing confidence, improving your communication skills, continually expanding your skill set and knowledge, integrity, doing what is right and in general – How I can develop a professional career.

Most of us, okay probably all of us, did not choose our current profession as our career path. It is not unusual that people with college degrees are working outside of their educational training. No matter our education or training, personal development should progress through the following steps: inventory, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Inventory:

If you do not know where you are, you cannot get to where you want to be. The first step in personal development is to take inventory of your assets. Assets can have several meanings such as:

- Money – The availability of funds can have an influence on the number of and speed in which you can participate in professional courses and workshops. All personal development should include improvement in your core job skills. Determine what courses/workshops are needed and estimate the costs to obtain those goals and this should include creating a budget. Do not fail to consider financial assistance and grants from professional groups and organization. Some possible avenues could be:
 - IAAO Scholarship Fund
 - Barbara Brunner Scholarship Fund
 - Jeff Hunt, CAE, Memorial, Candidates Trust
 - Timothy N. Hagemann Memorial Membership Trust

- Local IAAO Chapter grants
- State association grants

The IAAO information can be found on their website at:

<http://www.iaao.org/sitePages.cfm?Page=118>.

- Personal Assessment - Take some time to assess yourself so that the personal development plan you create will be as beneficial as possible. Write down your work history, educational history, weaknesses, strengths, abilities and goals. If you're unsure what your best abilities are, or unsure of what goals to pursue, taking assessment tests such as intelligence or aptitude tests may be beneficial. Some possible tests according to experts to help in this process are the Meyer-Briggs Type Indicator and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter to determine what kind of goals would best suit you. Receiving feedback about yourself from friends and family can also help you complete a personal assessment as accurately as possible.

Meyer-Briggs Type Indicator is a pay to use service and more information can be found at: <http://www.myersbriggsreports.com/default.asp?view=Assessments>.

The author of this paper has no experience with this test or company.

Keirsey Temperament Sorter can be found at:

<http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/instruments2.aspx?partid=0>. This also is a pay to use service but it does not show prices but asks over 60 questions and then tells you about the fee before they will unlock the results. If you are really curious, both of these services appear to be reasonable on their fees.

I remember as a junior in High School taking the Armed Forces Vocational Test. This examination nailed me as miserable on the mechanic skills and strong on the administration side stating I should be an accountant or administrator. I do not know if there is a fee for this but more information can be found at:

<http://www.military.com/ASVAB>.

There are a large number of concepts or points that I believe can fall under personal assessment and these are discussed below. Not sure if the order is as important as the review and application of the concepts.

- Seek out what you enjoy doing – We all have heard or used, “What I want to do when I grow up.” If we are going to work on our personal development, I guess it is time to grow up. It is not unusual that we have difficulty deciding what we want to do with our life. Take the time in this inventory portion to think about what you currently do, what you have an interest in doing and decide how you can reach the goal of doing what you enjoy.
- The Great Principle – perhaps the most important mental and spiritual principle ever discovered is that you become what you think about most of the time. Your outer world is very much a mirror image of your inner world. What is going on outside of you is a reflection of what is going on inside of you. You can tell the inner condition of a person by looking at the outer conditions of his or her life. And it cannot be otherwise as stated in Brian Tracy’s book titled *Change Your Thinking Change Your Life – how to unlock your full potential for success and achievement*.
- Obstacles of fear and doubt – Whenever you decide to seek out what you enjoy doing, it can cause some fears and doubts. Layout your plan well and work your way through the process. We all have the fear of failure, but most gains in life have some bumps and bruises. Whenever events go wrong, back away from it a little, take inventory of what went wrong and plan how to get back on track. Do not simply throw up your hands and walk away.
- Commitment – One of the largest downfalls with attempts to improve your personal development or for a large number of events in our life is the lack of commitment. People will give the mouth service or work on a project until they lose interest or something goes wrong and they let the obstacles of fear and doubt take over. If improving your personal development is a real goal you want to accomplish, you must make a commitment of your resources: time, talent and money.
- Confidence, positive thinking and believing in your self – One of the biggest problems that most people will face are the lack of confidence in their self. At times we literally have to give our self a pep talk. When events go wrong it does shake our confidence and our belief that we can make our plans work. Positive thinking should never be overrated. Having a positive attitude is so important in life and thus important in having confidence and belief that you can improve your personal development.

- Determine your most productive days and time of day - Some days of the week is more productive than others. Studies have shown that the most work during a week is usually done on Tuesday (51%) followed by Wednesday (25%), Monday (17%), Thursday (5%) and Friday (2%). See if your production mirrors the above and if so, spend time on your personal development projects on those days. All of us work differently. Determine also when your peak time of day is. Perhaps it is early of a morning when no one else is around.
- Time management – The following information is from a workshop titled, "How to be a Better Manager" by Marion Johnson, CAE and Rick Stuart, CAE.

Time management can be the difference between effective work and ineffective work.

- **Do you suffer from poor time management?**

- (Six symptoms of poor time management from Vicki Snyder, *Communication Connection*)

- ❖ Rushing to complete the job.
 - ❖ Chronic indecisiveness.
 - ❖ Fatigue with many slack hours.
 - ❖ Constantly missed deadlines.
 - ❖ Insufficient time for rest or personal relationships.
 - ❖ The sense of being overwhelmed and having to do what you don't want to do most of the time.

- **How well do you manage time?**

(Fill out the time management questionnaire on the next two pages)

How Well Do You Manage Time?

As you answer each question below, give yourself 1, 2, 3 or 0 points, according to the following scoring key:

If your answer is “always”, give yourself 3 points.

If your answer is “usually”, give yourself 2 points.

If your answer is “occasionally or sometimes”, give yourself 1 point.

If your answer is “never or rarely”, give yourself 0 points.

- _____ 1. Do you regularly review long-range goals for your personal and professional life?
- _____ 2. Do you spend a few minutes thinking about and planning your day before you start it?
- _____ 3. Do you outline each day’s appointments and key tasks in your calendar?
- _____ 4. Do you list your tasks and activities in priority order and concentrate on the top priorities?
- _____ 5. Do you keep and use an on going to do list, consisting of things you’d like to do in the future?
- _____ 6. Do you handle the most important tasks of the day when you feel more alert?
- _____ 7. Do you group similar tasks together and do them all at the same time?
- _____ 8. When you enter your office or pick up your mail, do you immediately discard messages and items you don’t need?
- _____ 9. When you’re working on a large project, do you break the tasks down into small chunks and work on a piece of the project at a time?
- _____ 10. Do you shut your door or engage in quiet time when you must handle detailed work?
- _____ 11. Do you keep reference materials, like telephone books, rolodexes and important manuals within arm’s length of your primary work area?
- _____ 12. Do you organize your working tools, like pens, rulers, telephones and equipment so they’re ready to use the minute you want them?

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- ___ 13. Do you maintain a simple, but well-defined filing system, into which you place all loose papers and materials?
 - ___ 14. In completing paperwork, do you handle each piece of paper only once?
 - ___ 15. Do you use a dictating machine to handle memo, messages, and correspondence?
 - ___ 16. Do you skim magazines, journals and reports to learn key information?
 - ___ 17. Do you use waiting time and travel time to handle small tasks or catch up on reading?
 - ___ 18. Do you make decisions and embark on courses of action quickly?
 - ___ 19. When you start a project or task, do you have backup plans, which can be quickly and easily implemented if your original plans didn't work?
 - ___ 20. Do you keep your secretary, assistant or colleagues informed about your work so they can handle minor tasks without interrupting you?
 - ___ 21. Do you give clear instructions to subordinates and colleagues, clear enough so they don't have to come back to you with ongoing questions?
 - ___ 22. Do you set clear agendas for meetings and stick to them?
 - ___ 23. Do you stop working on a task when you begin to feel stress or loss of energy?
 - ___ 24. Do you keep a simple time log to systematically access where and how you spend your time?
 - ___ 25. Do you take time each week to appraise your productivity and determine whether you've completed the goals you set out to accomplish?

The higher the score on this questionnaire, the better you manage your time.

▪ **Time management tips:**

- ❖ Plan and organize. Make a list of the things you want to accomplish. Studies have shown that every hour spent planning can save three to four hours in execution. A good idea is to save the last 10 minutes of each day to plan what you want to accomplish the next day. Also save the last 30 minutes of each week to plan for the following week.
- ❖ Prioritize your tasks.
 - Make a daily to-do list of something that can be accomplished.
 - Do the most important tasks first.
 - As you finish a task cross it off your list.
 - Concentrate on only one task at a time. Complete the task before moving on.
 - Be flexible, things will happen during the day that may change your priorities.
 - Reward yourself as you complete a task.
- ❖ Breakdown a major project into smaller component tasks that can be done in a short time. Target a date or time to complete each of the smaller component tasks and a date to complete the total project.
- ❖ Keep a time log in 15 or 30 minute increments for a week to help you see where your time does go. But only do this if you think you may have a time management problem.
- ❖ Identify time wasters.
 - External, things like equipment breakdown. These are ones you probably can't control.

- Internal, things like extended coffee breaks. These are ones you can control.
 - ❖ Delegate. Assign tasks to others to give you more time to handle only the tasks which you can do.
 - ❖ Control interruptions. Set aside a period of the day as off-limits during which time you will not be interrupted. Close the door, have your calls transferred to another person, etc.
 - ❖ Handle each piece of mail only once. If you do handle it more than once, make sure the first time that you prioritize or sort into groups of similar mail or action needed.
- **Handling paperwork:**
- When handling paperwork there are basically four things that you can do (*Best Organizing Tips*, Winston):
- ❖ Toss it: If you don't need it throw it away.
 - ❖ Refer it: If it is not your responsibility pass it along to the person who is responsible for it.
 - ❖ Act on it: If it is your responsibility then act on it and get it off your desk.
 - ❖ File it: Make sure it is filed in such a manner that you can find it again.
- **How to deal with high-payoff activities:** (Turla and Hawkins)
- ❖ Build your day around high-payoff activities; schedule less important items for the time left over. High-payoff items are those that can be of great benefit or allows for large portions of work to be performed as a result of those activities.
 - ❖ Stay focused.
 - ❖ Set deadlines. Make them specific.

- ❖ Divide projects into smaller units.
- ❖ Get help. Sometimes you can't do it alone.
- ❖ Use your peak times - Attack difficult tasks when you are mentally sharpest.
- ❖ Reward yourself.
- ❖ Make a commitment.
- **How to deal with low-payoff activities:** (Turla and Hawkins)
 - ❖ Delegate them.
 - ❖ Trade them with someone else.
 - ❖ Use a check list.
 - ❖ Lower your standards. What is the minimum acceptable level of quality?
 - ❖ Ignore them.
 - ❖ Pay someone else to do them.
 - ❖ Group them together.
- Verbal and written communication skills – A March 2011 article in *The Wall Street Journal* discussed a survey of CEO's about what skills are the weakest of new college graduates and new employees. The answer: Lack of verbal and written communication skills. Some of the comments were directed to use of cell phones, email, text messaging and extensive abbreviations and thus removing the practice of more formal written communications.
 - ❖ The following information is from a workshop titled, "How to be a Better Manager" by Marion Johnson, CAE and Rick Stuart, CAE.

- ❖ Communication is the foundation of successful teamwork. Knowing how to properly communicate is vital. It is important that we successfully communicate what the message is. That sounds simple enough but a lot of times this can be a real stumbling block for all of us.
- ❖ Definition of Communication:
 - Communication: A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior; a technique for expressing ideas; the technology of the transmission of information (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary).
 - The sharing of ideas and information for the purpose of helping people understand one another (Advanced Supervisory Practices manual).
- ❖ The Communication Process:
 - Communication is a two way process. Communication entails the sending and receiving of information. Good communication is a dual process and involves both the ability to articulate messages and the capacity to understand responses to them. The sender must be able to communicate accurately and completely. The receiver must understand the message and must be willing to act on the communication in an appropriate manner. When communication breaks down it typically is because the receiver did not understand the message the same way the sender did. As the creator and sender of a message, you have the responsibility to express your message in such a way that the receiver will understand it.
- ❖ Communication within an Organization:
 - Communication flows within an organization in several ways. Most communication is formal in nature but there are also several informal communication flows within an organization that we must be aware of. Following is a list of the type of communication flows found within an organization:

✓ Downward communication

✚ Job instructions

✚ Office memos

- ◆ Email is now often used as a form of communication. Remember that all email can be retrieved so make sure you use it professionally and not have spelling and grammatical errors. Treat it the same as if it were a business letter.

✚ Staff meetings

✓ Upward communication

✚ Suggestion boxes

✚ Grievances procedures

✓ Horizontal communication - communication that takes place among people on the same level of the organization.

✓ Lateral communication - communication that takes place among people on different levels of the organization.

✓ Informal communication

✚ The grapevine

✚ Body language

❖ Communication Styles:

- Visual communicator - These are individuals who like to see what they are learning. They need to receive the message in writing. This places more emphasis on making written instructions clear.

- Auditory communicator - These are the talkers and listeners. They like to discuss work projects. They tend to think out loud and are uncomfortable with written communications. A disadvantage of this style is that words disappear once spoken and conversations are often remembered differently by different participants. One way to insure they have properly heard the communication is to have them repeat the message back to you.
- Kinesthetic communicator - This type of communicator understands better when they are able to handle and examine items and have the opportunity to practice new skills. They learn by doing, not by reading or by listening.
- You need to understand how you learn and then use that technique to your benefit.

(A communicator style exercise is on the next two pages).

Communication Style Checklist

Listed below are ten incomplete sentences and three ways of completing each sentence. Check the one statement that is most typical of you when you are not busy and not feeling stress. Then count the number of checks on each line. The first line is Visual, second is Auditory and third is Kinesthetic.

1. I keep up with current events by:
 - Reading the newspaper thoroughly when I have time
 - Listening to the radio or watching TV news
 - Quickly reading the paper or spending a few minutes watching TV news

2. If I have business to conduct with another person, I prefer:
 - Face-to-face meetings, or writing letters or memos
 - The telephone
 - Conversing while walking, jogging, or doing something else physical

3. My emotions can often be interpreted from my:
 - Facial expressions
 - Voice quality and tone
 - General posture

4. When I'm angry, I usually:
 - Clam up and give others the silent treatment
 - Am quick to verbalize why I'm angry, and may mutter under my breath
 - Clench my fists, grasp something tightly, stiffen my jaws, or storm off

5. When I'm driving, I:
 - Frequently check the mirrors and watch the road carefully
 - Listen to the radio, if alone. Prefer to talk, if with others
 - Often shift position to get more comfortable

6. I consider myself:
 - A fashionable dresser
 - A sensible dresser
 - A comfortable dresser

7. At a meeting, I:
- Am most comfortable taking notes
 - Enjoy discussing issues and hearing other points of view
 - May find it hard to sit still and would rather be elsewhere. Often I stretch, squirm, pace
8. In my spare time, I prefer to:
- Watch TV or read
 - Listen to music or talk shows, or visit with others
 - Engage in physical activity, sports, or go for a walk
9. When I discipline a child, I often:
- Isolate the child
 - Reason with the child
 - Touch the child to get his or her attention
10. I typically reward employees by:
- Writing positive comments on their reports, or posting good work for others to see
 - Orally praising the employee
 - Giving him or her a handshake

- ❖ Four communication styles
 - Other research studies have established that people fall into four main categories when you are talking about communication styles which are:
 - ✓ “Why” people – they want all the reasons for doing something.
 - ✓ “What” people – they want all the facts about it.
 - ✓ “How” people – they want only the information they need to get it done.
 - ✓ “What If” people – they are more interested in the consequences of doing it.
- ❖ Barriers to Organizational Communication:
 - Status - In many organizations who says something is more important than what is said.
 - Environmental barriers – These include factors such as noise, temperature, air quality, location and the immediate surroundings (cramped/spacious, tidy/messy, etc.) Each of these has an effect not only on a person’s ability to communicate or listen, but also on their enthusiasm and motivation.
 - Background barriers – Everyone encodes their thoughts and interprets other people’s meaning based on their own cultural, social and educational backgrounds. Among a diverse group of people, this can cause all sorts of problems.
 - Personal barriers – Fatigue, hunger, thirst and other temporary conditions comprise personal barriers to communication, as do personal prejudices and circumstances.

- Number of links - Mainly a problem with verbal communication. How many times the message is retold is a problem. Every time it is retold it tends to get changed.
- Expansion and contraction - Verbal messages moving downward in the organization tend to be expanded as each person tends to add something to the message. Messages moving upward through the organization tend to be contracted.
- Organizational politics - Every organization has its little groups. These groups tend to work well with their members but do not communicate well with other members of the organization, mainly because they tend to guard their own territory.
- Economic threats - If a person's job is threaten they will communicate differently.
- Negative staff – Staff members with a negative attitude can make further barriers for your personal development. Effort should be made to reach out to them and try to resolve issues that may be creating the attitude. The reality is that some people are just that way and you cannot change them. If this happens to be your supervisor and they are negative about your request to improve your position in life, it may require you to secretly work on your personal development or to find another place of employment.
- Changing the culture – The government often is credited with the comment “We have always done it that way,” This comment is used throughout the private sector also. Be a leader in changing the culture to a more progressive professional based concept. Leading people to be open minded on change and that the change can help with personal development is possible.

❖ Ways to Overcome Communication Barriers:

- Know your audience - By this we mean know who will receive the message, how they are likely to interpret the message and what will be the effect of this interpretation.
- Emphasize value - When communicating a message try to emphasize to the receiver the value to them if they follow through with the message.
- Small bites - Best messages are those that are simple and to the point.
- Consult with others - Have someone else read or listen to the subject in your message, especially if the communication is technical or potentially controversial.
- Encourage trust and openness - Don't try to hide things from the person you are trying to communicate with. Be truthful and open with your communications.

❖ Take Responsibility for Communication with Others:

When communicating with others the communicator/listener should take 100 percent responsibility for the communication. Whether you are attempting to communicate something or you are listening to something being communicated to you, it is entirely your responsibility to ensure that your message is understood or that you understand the message that you are being given. Some specific examples of how to take responsibility for communication are;

- Avoid making assumptions of any kind.
- Ask the other person to repeat what they think you have asked them to do.
- Be absolutely clear about requirements and expectations and specifically vocalize anticipated deadlines.

- Repeat to the other person your interpretation of what they have said.
 - Ask for clarification and perhaps examples of what is required.
 - Ask detailed questions. The more you talk to everyone, the better sense you'll get for whether each person on the team is playing the role they need to.
- ❖ Communication Killers
- Making the other person wrong
 - Talking too much about your self
 - Interrupting
 - Talking too much about the negative
 - Treating your technology device as more important than the person you are speaking to. Stay current but periodically tune out.
 - Social networks. Be careful that your use does not interfere with your goals.
- ❖ First impression – You only have one opportunity to make that good first impression. Review how you approach and interact with people, particularly those you meet for the first time. If you are uncomfortable in this process, sit back and watch other people. You may see someone that makes that good first impression and learn from it.
- ❖ Education – How does your education fit into your goals? Review what educational requirements or equivalencies are needed for what you are attempting to obtain or conferences that you would like to attend and projects you would like to work on.

- ❖ What do you need - Write down the type of additional work experience and skills you need in order for you to achieve your career objectives.
- ❖ Read and write - Read books regularly and write articles or posts - Your brain needs new information daily to keep developing, and reading books is one of the best ways to do just that. Find a few minutes a day to read books on personal development, and it will help you grow even if you don't find any terribly useful ideas in any book. Also read information related to your goals. Take the time to read all the IAAO's magazines, although some of the information may seem too technical, continued exposure to items leads to a better understanding. **NEVER STOP LEARNING!**

Planning:

Planning is a process that most people do not like, unless they want to. Planning is something we all do, either formally or informally. It is not something done only by big businesses and corporations. The plans we develop will be an important tool that we can use to motivate and focus our self in the right direction. The first step in the planning process should always be an analysis of your current situation as stated in *How to be a Better Manager* by Marion Johnson, CAE and Rick Stuart, CAE.

Paige Turner, *How to Create a Professional Business Plan*, states that “having a professional development plan is an important part of career development. A development plan will lay out your career objectives and the path you will take towards achieving them.”

Take some time to sit down by yourself and identify your career goals and objectives within your organization. Clearly write out your one year and five year career goals and what you need to do in order to achieve them.

If your goals are out of sync with what you can accomplish within your current organization, this should be a signal to you to look for change.

In order to accomplish your goals you need to break down your goals into smaller tasks with well-defined timelines. Set up a calendar schedule with target dates for accomplishing each task.

Once you have identified your career goals, it is your responsibility to be proactive and take the initiative to do what it takes to accomplish your goals. Be willing to adapt and modify your goals according to changing circumstances. Use feedback from your manager, colleagues and friends to constantly evolve your professional development plan. Sometimes external sources are better able to identify your strengths, weaknesses and areas for development.

Gleb Reys, author of *Personal Development Ideas* suggests the following:

- Do Your Goal Setting - It is absolutely vital to set your goals, otherwise how would you know whether you're achieving them or not? In setting those goals, you must decide exactly what you want and write them down in detail.
- Make sure your every goal is valuable to you – because you will not be able to put your efforts into something which has no value to you. Be willing to pay a price – financially and with your time.
- Make sure your every goal is an absolute necessity – unless you're sure you absolutely have to achieve your goal, it will very soon drop down to the status of a “good to have” kind of things, and may be dropped and forgotten shortly after.
- Realize that achieving a goal is a process, not just a result – no point in spending your precious time in the hope that one day you'll reach your goal and it will change your whole life. What if that never happens? Stay conscious about the fact that achieving your goal is a process – and learn to enjoy this process, this is the only way to be successful.
- Focus on important things
- Get organized - Organize your workplace and your home office, designate areas and time for processing your email and other incoming information like letters, magazines, newspapers and print-outs. Get rid of all the stuff you don't need, and learn to do it during your processing sessions.
- Plan ahead and manage time effectively
- Do something every day.
- Never give up. Modify your plan as needed, but do not give up.

Implementation:

Brian Tracy's *Goals: How to get everything you want – faster than you ever thought possible*, uses a well known example about implementing your plan. William of Ockham, a British philosopher proposed a method of problem solving that is referred to as Ockham's razor. This states, "The simplest and most direct solution, requiring the fewest number of steps, is usually the correct solution to any problem." Not all solutions have to be complicated we just have to spend the time to solve.

In a survey reported in *Success Magazine* a few years ago, 104 chief executive officers were presented with twenty qualities of an ideal employee and asked to select the most important. Eighty-six percent of the senior executives selected two qualities as being more important for career success and advancement than any others. First was the ability to set priorities, to separate the relevant from the irrelevant. Second was the ability to get the job done fast, to execute quickly.

It is my belief there are several elements to consider in implementing your plan and being successful. These elements are in no particular order.

- Do the right thing – People will notice.
- Integrity and honesty – These basis concepts cannot be overstated.
- Build consensus - Consensus building can be defined as a coordination of the activities of all involved parties to obtain a desired set of goals or objectives. Another way to look at consensus building is to say that everyone has participated in, understands and is committed to supporting the decision. Consensus building will only happen if the process includes an assessment of the situation, dialogue, decision making, action and repetition of the steps again and again.
- Dress for success – This may seem old-fashioned but it still speaks volume about people. Can you be successful in flip-flops and a tee-shirt? Sure you can but what audience are you dealing with? If you want to be a professional, act and dress like one.
- Brainstorm and think outside the box – Look for creative ways to implement your plan and keep your motivation.

- Look for a mentor – Each of us has had someone in our life that we could ask questions or ask for help. Find that mentor who will review your goals, give advice and assist you in reaching those goals. Look for a mentor that shares your same passions for the goals that are set. Share your goals and ask them to review your plan and make suggestions. Remember, they have been there before and may be able to save you from common mistakes and heading down the wrong path. Look around for friends or professional acquaintances that have been successful and ask if they had a mentor and if so who? Just make sure that when you reach your goals, you give back by becoming a mentor.
 - Perhaps your office can establish an educational development plan and part of that plan can be the matching of veteran employees with those less experienced. That process would give those wanting to improve a direct line for questions and advice. Staff development from within is a very powerful method of building good moral and good people and helping people in their personal development.
 - Never stop learning – Continuously read to enhance your knowledge and skills.
 - Avoid procrastination – If procrastination is continued, tomorrow will never come.
 - Avoid becoming complacent – Some opportunities may be:
 - Organizational involvement such as IAAO or the local chapter of IAAO
 - Volunteer to serve on a professional organization committee and be active on the committee
 - Market yourself by volunteering to make a presentation at a conference or avoid all this work by just winning the lottery! Maybe you should do the volunteering.

Evaluation:

After the implementation of all plans, an evaluation should be done. The evaluation should be continuous so you can make any needed changes as quickly as possible in order to stay on track to obtain your goals. Some items to consider on your evaluation are:

- Failure will happen, work around it and do not be discouraged
- Review and modify the plan
- Relax and have some fun

Conclusion:

- Take inventory of all your resources, both financial and skill level
- Spend considerable time on developing a workable and obtainable plan
- Implementation of the plan – as the saying goes “plan your work and work your plan”
- Evaluate the plan and change as needed
- Find and use a mentor
- Foremost – Have a positive attitude and have confidence