

Managing your on-going learning and development can feel daunting – particularly if ‘school’ wasn’t your favourite thing or there are priorities in your life outside of work that seem like they can occupy all of your free time.

It can feel overwhelming to even decide on a course to take or choose which seminar to attend. However, we know that in Insurance – change is a constant. It is important to build on a solid technical foundation to be able to drive our business forward and empower ourselves to be nimble in an evolving marketplace.

Knowledge is a valued commodity in the property and casualty insurance industry. It not only enables you to act in the best interest of consumers and your organization, but advances your career as well.

Below are some tips and tools to help you take control of your learning and development, establish a few goals, and set yourself up for success.

1 Ask yourself... Where am I now?

Consult the career map on the my**career** site that is most relevant to where you are now in your career. This will help you to benchmark and get some suggestions to get you thinking about what might come next in your learning and development.

It may also be helpful to consult the Education Pathways section of the my**career** site as well to better understand how the Insurance Institute’s offerings connect to where you are now in your career and where you might like to go.

And, don’t forget to take into account your personality... What is most like you? Are you someone who needs to dive in whole hog or start slow? This all will be helpful in deciding what comes next.

2 Exploring Your Options... Where do I want to go?

If you are unsure about what’s next in your career, it might be helpful to take our career quiz or to consult multiple career maps on the my**career** website to help you understand how you can leverage your experience thus far in the sector to advance your career both on your current path or in other roles across the industry.

The Experience Speaks section also has some great insights from industry professionals about how knowledge building has played a role in their own careers. These can serve as inspiration to further your own learning, particularly if you are feeling a little uncertain.

By understanding where you want to go in your career, you can set goals related to your knowledge that will help you get there.

You will also want to do some homework within your own organization as well. There may be career maps, development planning tools, or training programs available within your organization. Ask your manager or your HR team for more details on what may be available.

3 Setting Goals... How will I get there?

After you have benchmarked both where you are at and where you would like to go, you can start to set some goals and objectives. Think both in the short term and long term.

Where does it make the most sense to start?

What would I like I take in the next few months? What about the next year?

How will this help me in my current role? In working towards my career goals?

What do I hope to have achieved when it comes to building my knowledge in the next three years?

Are there ways I can complement my learning? (i.e. taking on additional responsibilities, attending an industry event or seminar, asking for a stretch assignment, etc.)

And, as noted earlier... be sure to consider your personality and an approach that is going to be most realistic for you when it comes to your learning.

By breaking this process down into pieces, it can become less daunting and seemingly more manageable.

You may also find it helpful to discuss your goals with your manager, a mentor, or your HR team. A collaborative approach can often help a lot in terms of building a realistic plan and garnering the backing of your company in supporting your on-going learning and development.

4 How do I set myself up for success?

Now that you have identified a few short and long term goals related to knowledge, you will want to take a few steps to set yourself up for learning success:

- **Consider your learning style** – how and where do you learn best? This will help you to choose an offering and apply some strategies that will help you in maximizing your learning. If you are unsure about your learning style, the my**career** website has an assessment tool (My Learning Style) that can help.
- **Leverage your support systems** – taking on new learning challenges can sometimes be a little bit scary or seemingly overwhelming at first. Talking to your friends, family, partner, colleagues, or manager can help. Together, you can put plans in place to provide encouragement and support for your learning – e.g. creating time or a space to study, getting support with household responsibilities, study partners, accommodating work priorities, etc.
- **Think about your study and learning habits** – are you setting yourself up for success? The my**career** website has an assessment tool (My Study Skills) that can help you to take stock of your habits and provide suggestions on how to make the most of your learning opportunity.

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- **Embrace it!** – learning new things is a chance to (re)ignite a spark within ourselves! Be curious. Challenge yourself. And, have fun with it! Continued development helps us to not only keep on top of emerging issues, legislation, and trends in the insurance sector but can ensure we do not stagnate and limit our opportunities for career and personal growth.

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Knowledge alone does not equal Career Advancement... For real.

Formal learning can seem like an easy way to advance your insurance career. Take a few seminars, complete a couple of courses, work towards your designations... and you're done! Right?! Wrong.

While learning is a key part of the equation, you will also want to take advantage of the opportunity to learn from colleagues on the job, engage in industry events, work with a mentor, stay on top of emerging trends in the industry, build your skills and experience, and develop your leadership competencies.

These things in concert will help you in mapping where you would like to go in your career and embracing and thriving in the opportunities that will help to get you there.