Ready, Set, Grow!

Echoes the attitude and actions needed to thrive during changing times!

In his book “Growing the Distance”, Jim Clemmer provides a great prescription for thriving during change, “We can just manage change as it hits us. Or we can prepare for it through an ongoing process of discovery.” This quote powerfully speaks about attitude, growth and development.

To know if we are growing the distance, Clemmer states we need to be able to answer three basic questions using honesty, effort, inner reflection and outer feedback:

1) Where do I want to go?
2) Where am I now?
3) What do I need to change or improve to close the gap?

Clemmer adds another thought provoking question, “What’s your best defense against being a victim of change?”

His reply...“To grow and develop every day; to change yourself - and lead others in the process.” Do this by:

1) Defining your vision, values and purpose so you know where you are going. Many people know what they don’t want; far fewer know what they do want.
2) Understanding where you are now calls for courage and honesty to squarely face your strengths, weaknesses, successes and setbacks.
3) Taking a close look at choices you make during change and where you put your focus: listing what actions you need to take to go forward, grow and develop.

True and lasting security comes from constant growth and development. The higher rate of personal growth and development, the more likely we are to master the opportunities that change unexpectedly throws in front of us. In a constantly changing world, this is the only security we can count on to face challenges and thrive!

Experts on Campus Identify Skills in Demand!

Project Management Skills - handling the complexity of work, sophisticated processes and multiple functions

Knowledge Transfer Skills - sharing expertise with others; contributing toward development, collaboration and teamwork

Problem Solving / Investigative / Research Skills - identifying issues and searching resourcefully to find innovative solutions

Systems Thinking Skills - understanding, changing and creating efficient systems

Cultural Diversity Skills - understanding differences in people’s values, work styles and preferences across the globe, cultures and generations

Leadership Skills - facilitating high performance by engaging, coaching and developing others

University Acumen Skills - understanding the academic culture and needs of all stakeholders and partners; supporting the mission and values of the University

Computing / Information Technology - applying new and emerging technologies

Learning Agility - broadening knowledge, staying open, flexible, and learning the lessons along the way

Public Relations Skills - effectively using interpersonal and communication skills for relationship building
A single skill is never enough in your career development:

We are comfort zone creatures. We build nests. We go where it feels safe and good. Most of us don’t like taking chances. Most of us don’t venture onto alien ground comfortably. For those reasons, many of us take the safe career track, we think of learning one thing and doing it well. In our early careers, this gets us good pay and promotions up the career ladder. We pass up people who are not as deeply skilled as we. We play the one skill, one technology, one business, one function or one talent (e.g. selling) all the way. The trouble is this one skill doesn’t go all the way because all things change. One of the requirements for higher-level management and career fulfillment is breadth and diversity. If you succeed long enough, you’ll manage or work closely with new functions and businesses. A single skill is never enough.

Think carefully about your next natural point for an assignment change:

This time, press your boss, business unit or organization for something different. Could be different geography, same job but different assignments, or a completely different job. Sometimes if you have been in something too long, you may have to take a lateral or even a short term down-grading to get on a different track.

Volunteer for task forces and study teams outside your area:

Attend off-sites and meetings of functions and units other than yours. In addition to the literature you now read in your specialty, expand to a broader selection of journals and magazines. Take a seminar or workshop outside your area just for the fun of it.

Vacation more broadly than you do now:

Get out of your comfort zone and explore new places. If you can arrange for it, vacation outside your home country.

Find someone who is as specialized as you are who also is seeking expansion and teach your specialties to each other:

Get together a small group; have each person agree to present a new technology or business topic each month to the group. Teaching something new for you is one of the best ways to learn it yourself.

Look to some people in your area who are in higher-level jobs than you are:

Are they as specialized as you are? Are they struggling in their new roles because they are as specialized as you are?

Find some experts in what you need to learn:

Interview them; find out how they think about their area. Take something to them in their area and ask them how they figure it out. What are the five key things to look for?

Pick three people who are broadly skilled:

Ask them how they got to be that way. What job experiences have they had? What do they read? Watch on TV? Who do they learn from?

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Source: Michael Lombardo & Robert Eichinger, For Your Improvement

Take Home Tip:
Conduct a Career SWOT

To leverage your unique strengths and stay ahead in a continually changing workplace, you can start by examining your current situation. A SWOT analysis gives you an objective look at your career and helps you develop realistic goals.

STRENGTHS:
What skills have you learned easily, naturally and with great enjoyment? What skills energize you? List your signature skills, actions, and resources available.

WEAKNESSES:
What are your negative attributes or poor habits? What relevant work experience do you lack? List your weaknesses and development needs, actions, and resources available.

OPPORTUNITIES:
What is your outlook on your business unit, department and organization? Are there activities and / or projects that can help you acquire or strengthen skills? List your opportunities, actions, and resources available.

THREATS:
Presently or in the near future could you be at a disadvantage? Are any of your skills, knowledge or experience becoming obsolete? List your threats, actions, and resources available.

McMaster Leadership Effectiveness

New Manager Orientation Program
This highly customized program incorporates McMaster’s leadership competencies with practical knowledge of business, financial and human resources practices and procedures.

http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/NMOP

Certificate in Advanced Leadership & Management
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Newest Resources Available

• What Color is Your Parachute? 2009 by Richard Bolles
• Grown Up Digital: How the Next Generation is Changing Your World by Don Tapscott
• Plugged In: The Generation Y Guide to Thriving at Work by Tamara J. Erickson

To be Released in Summer 2009

• Strategies for Successful Career Change: Finding Your Very Best Next Work Life by Martha Mangelsdorf
• The First 60 Seconds: Win the Job Interview Before it Begins by Daniel Burns
• Your Next Career by Gail Geary