

Be A Lifelong Learner

My name is Ann Kuhlmann and I am a lifelong learner. I would like to encourage everyone to become lifelong learners. Lifelong learners value themselves, and realize that upgrading work skills or learning new activities results in benefits both tangible and intangible. You may say that you are too busy right now or that you cannot afford to go back to school, but you are worth the investment. There are many options to continue your education without going back for a degree, spending lots of money, or giving up all of your free time.

Whether or not your employer will pay for your continuing education should not deter you from continuing to learn. You are worth the investment. There are many ways to upgrade your skills. Check out your local high school district or community college. Most offer continuing education classes that may interest you including software and life skills classes. Consider online classes to continue your education. An online class may be less expense than a bricks and mortar classroom and offers greater flexibility, making it easier to fit into your schedule.

I discovered that by taking computer software classes online from Oakton Community College I developed skills my company could use, allowing me to successfully take on projects that I otherwise would not have tried. Also, by learning new versions of the software that I was using, I was better prepared when I suddenly went from Office 2003 in August 2009 to Office 2007 in January 2010. The investment I made in taking the classes expanded my skill set and also made me more valuable to my company.

Another source for classes is through your high school district. For example, District 214 offers adult classes in the evening or on Saturdays at the high schools. Types of classes offered include: computer training, software training, soft skills, and exercise.

Realize that picking up new skills or upgrading existing ones can be done a little at a time. One class here, a seminar there all adds up over the long run. Go at your own pace, and set goals for the type of skills you'd like to acquire.

To get ideas of the types of classes that might give you useful new skills, talk to the personnel you support and see what unmet needs they have, needs you might be able to fill if you develop the right knowledge and skills. Check with your supervisor to see if there is any money to pay for a class to obtain the knowledge or software skills needed. Let your supervisor know that the investment will provide increased productivity in the office as your taking on this project will free the manager to do other projects. Even if your company is not willing to spend the money, it may be in your best interest to invest in yourself to obtain the skill. Employers value employees who have the knowledge and skill-set needed to grow the company.

Continuing to learn throughout your life is a great investment in yourself. Remember that you are the greatest asset you have, and investing in your future is a smart and effective way to expand job opportunities and perhaps even job satisfaction. It can open new networking opportunities while learning new skills that you may use in your current position, to grow your job, or keep your skills current in case you need to seek another position. Your self-confidence will grow and you will meet new people. Become a lifelong learner, you won't regret it.