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PROPEL

FINDING SUCCESS THROUGH SKILL BUILDING

ELLEN ADES

THERE IS A LONG LIST OF ATTRIBUTES CAREER COACHES DISCUSS WHEN ADVISING CLIENTS. TALENT IS DISCUSSED BUT THAT CAN ALWAYS BE DEVELOPED. INTEGRITY, DISCIPLINE, AND RESILIENCE ARE NOT DISCUSSED OFTEN ENOUGH, BUT THEY ARE QUALITIES THAT CAN CERTAINLY IMPACT A PERSON'S TRAJECTORY TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER. CLIENTS AND COACHES ALWAYS FOCUS ON CURRENT SKILLS. ONE STRATEGIC QUESTION THAT DIRECTLY IMPACTS CONTINUED SUCCESS MIGHT BE, "WHAT SKILLS CAN BE LEARNED NEXT?"



What actually delivers opportunity? What puts a person in a place of choice? What moves you towards better earnings and overall success? Skills.

Just as you have legs that move you towards a local destination, and a car moving you on longer distance journeys, skills are the vehicle that moves you onward and upward throughout your career. Just as eating creates energy, or putting gasoline or electricity in your car makes it go, you must continually acquire skills to keep moving forward professionally. Skills fuel your career.

There are both hard and soft skills. Some skills that were once important are no longer useful and new ones are continually emerging and demand acquisition because they have become essential to growth.

Soft skills are often overlooked but paramount in getting ahead at work. Being able to recognize and manage your own emotions, and your relationships with others is key. Playing well with others is not only essential to workers; if you run your own business, it allows you to evoke better results from employees.

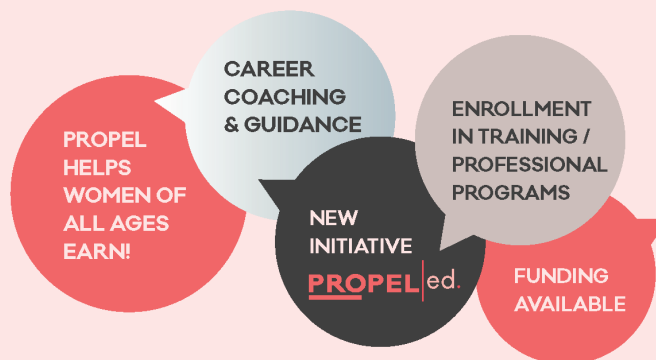
Historically, the most basic of these soft skills were learned naturally as a part of growing up. We learned by communicating face-to-face with parents; then we learned in the sand box: then school: then the larger world. Today, because so much human interaction is done through technology, and so much focus has been lost to staring at a screen, younger people don't have the requisite experience with face-to-face communication. They must put effort in honing those 'people reading' skills and many do.

You might not know when opportunity will knock, but you can position yourself to take advantage when it shows up. Communication skills both aural, oral and written must be constantly upgraded. You can learn in school or on your own.

Listening skills are barely taught but are so valuable. You'd be surprised how much insight one can gain by observing. Reading well-written books may not only improve your vocabulary but your sentence phrasing as well.

Effective speaking can deliver better results on interviews and on the job. Toastmasters International is a non-profit devoted to improving speaking skills. They have groups everywhere. Those considering an upgrade in verbal communication might consider familiarizing themselves with the Toastmasters mission. Find a group that fits your style and be prepared to learn and enjoy at the same time.

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Anything is possible if you have a growth mindset and can commit to being a life-long learner.

Our brains have a wonderful capacity for passive learning. We can pick up skills painlessly through association. We are affected by our surroundings so we can improve by exposing ourselves to excellent influences. Take advantage.

One cannot speak about skills without mentioning technology. Do not underestimate the continual unfolding opportunities in technology and not just in e-commerce. A World Economic Forum report says that by 2025 time spent on tasks by machines and humans will be equal but that 97 million jobs will be created globally. To remain relevant in an automated world, employees will need to learn new skills to suit the new technological landscape.

There are some serious skill-building initiatives in the technology sector being promoted by Microsoft, Amazon and Google. Some are cost free to participants, but you have to be seriously committed. Others have a modest cost.

The American business magazine, *Fast Company*, has described these initiatives recently:

"Microsoft Corp said this year that it aims to place 50,000 people in jobs that require technology skills as part of a broader push being undertaken with its professional networking website LinkedIn to help workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic move into new fields." LinkedIn made free many of its digital skills training courses, covering topics such as software development, data analysis and financial analysis. LinkedIn announced it will extend the free courses until the end of this year." Microsoft and LinkedIn had aimed to get 25 million people to try the courses and that the figure has already hit 30.7 million, most from the United States but with many from almost every other part of the world."

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Investigate Amazon's Tech Academy. "The program, part of Amazon's \$700 million investment in upskilling, is open to any nontechnical employee (such as truck drivers and warehouse maintenance staff). It provides intensive reskilling with the goal of hiring students as Amazon software developers. Participants have gone on to be successful members of Amazon's technical teams."

Fast Company reiterates what we have read for the past few years. "Even before the pandemic, young developers in particular utilized nontraditional learning: In early 2020, 71% of Gen Z developers reported using YouTube to learn new coding skills. Now, coding boot camps are reporting historic enrollment surges."

Google has partnered with Coursera, the online learning platform, to offer Google Career Certificates through self-paced courses in data analytics, project management, UX Design and IT Support. The program charges a modest \$40 per month and is self-paced so that depending on your

personal timeline it can be a low cost skill builder with a great return on your investment.

I'm a believer that you must strive to thrive. Get ready to bloom by adding new fuel to your career journey. Information about these programs is easily accessible. Look online, read about these programs and of course, contact PROPEL for guidance and support. □

Ellen Ades is a PROPEL life and career coach.

If you are interested in a career, please reach out to PROPEL and we can help you fulfill your professional goal. Call PROPEL at 646-494-0822 or Email: info@thepropelnetwork.org

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Propel specializes in career coaching and guidance that is centered on finding the most suitable career with our community and family values in mind. Need direction? Make an appointment. Tuition assistance is available. We provide the financial support as needed to help our members reach their goals.

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