
TTI DNA[®]

Continuous Learning

*A session from
Rx Online*

Continuous Learning

Taking initiative to regularly learn new concepts, technologies and/or methods.

Why is this skill important?

Different cognitive values cause each person to have a different motivation. People with a more balanced value structure tend to have more potential motivators for accomplishing things on the job and in their personal lives. Continuous Learning is one cognitive value that motivates people to action, and it is based on the importance a person places on improving oneself.

People who are strongly motivated by Continuous Learning are eager to find opportunities to obtain training and educational growth opportunities. People who are not strongly motivated by Continuous Learning may pass up opportunities for personal growth and, thus, may be passed by when the time for promotion comes, due to their lack of enthusiasm about improving their skills.

Most successful people actively pursue learning opportunities every day. They may attend seminars, classes and conferences. They may take on special challenges in the workplace. They may dissect errors they made and determine how to avoid them in the future. They may research topics within their fields and become experts. In the best cases, successful people do all of these things, and they do them with enthusiasm.

To reach your full potential, you must have an accurate understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. To get a clear picture of your positive and negative traits, you will need to combine insights you have had on your own, with those insights revealed by your competency report and comments made to you in performance reviews. Once you have determined your goals for continuous learning, you can identify practical steps toward achieving the knowledge and skills you need to reach those goals. Setting goals is the first step in effectively approaching a continuous learning plan.

Today's workplace requires that you keep pace and continually learn new procedures, strategies and technologies to stay abreast of developments in your field. It is your responsibility to dedicate yourself to broadening your knowledge in areas that apply to your business by creating and sticking to a rational, well-thought-out continuous learning plan. As you can see, effective continuous learning involves taking deliberate action in creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities. In addition, you must reflect carefully on what you have learned in order to make your new skills or knowledge part of your daily routine.

What skills are associated with Continuous Learning?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Continuous Learning:

- Demonstrates curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.
- Takes initiative in acquiring and mastering the skills and knowledge requirements of a position.
- Keeps abreast of current or new information through reading and other learning methods.
- Is actively interested in new technologies, processes and methods.
- Welcomes or seeks assignments requiring new skills and knowledge.
- Expends considerable effort and/or expense on learning.
- Genuinely enjoys learning.
- Identifies applications for knowledge.
- Is considered a knowledgeable resource by others.

How do you develop your own skills in Continuous Learning?

- Know what your job description or key accountabilities are, what your supervisor expects of you, and what you expect of yourself. It may help to keep these expectations posted in an obvious place in your office or workspace.
- Make a list of personal continuous learning goals that you have. These may be professional (become certified by next summer) or personal (learn to speak another language).
- Set reasonable expectations for your own progress. Relate your learning goals to specific activities you can accomplish on a regular basis.
- Read. Read. Read. And read carefully. Read major publications in your field. Read the latest relevant books. Read about topics outside of your area of expertise.
- Work hard to identify at least one critical insight in everything you read and determine how you can apply that knowledge to your daily work.
- Network with others, both in your field of expertise and outside of it, by attending special events, seminars, workshops and conferences.
- Find opportunities to think in a different way from the usual. Take a yoga or literature class or travel to a foreign location.
- Set aside time to act on and reflect upon your learning goals.
- Look for opportunities for continuous learning in your workplace. The best learning environment is often right in front of you.
- Experiment with new processes for routine tasks. Look at things from a different angle or try to apply something new to an old task.
- Ask someone new for input into a project or allow someone else the authority to take action on an important task. See what you can learn from other people.
- Seek honest feedback from trusted mentors or peers and don't be defensive when you hear what they have to say.
- Learn from your successes. Think about how you might apply the same skills in a different setting.
- Learn from your mistakes. Be willing to identify what events within your control could be changed if the same situation happened again.
- Be open to feedback from other people but make your own decisions.

- Periodically update your list of goals and, at the same time, create a new, Continuous Learning plans to help you reach your goals for self-improvement.

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Activities

Activity I: Broaden Your Knowledge Base

Part 1

Make two lists of things you want or need to read. In the first column, write the titles of five books, articles or other publications that would directly help you on the job or give you perspective on your performance. On the second column, write the titles of at least three publications that interest you for personal reasons (a hobby, a special charity you support, etc.). Make time each week to read these publications and absorb their contents into your daily routine.

Work Related Reading	Personal Reading

Part 2

List three upcoming special events, seminars, workshops or conferences related to your field. If you don't know how to find out about those opportunities, be sure to join professional associations in your field. Professional associations often host events featuring topics within your industry. Don't be afraid to ask your employer to contribute to your membership fees in professional organizations or to pay for you to attend relevant workshops or courses.

Event 1: _____ **Date:** _____
Event 2: _____ **Date:** _____
Event 3: _____ **Date:** _____

Activity 2: Realistic Goal Setting

Be realistic about your positive attributes and the areas in which you need improvement on the job. Clearly identifying the skills needed to achieve each of your primary goals is the first step in reaching your goals.

First, list the continuous learning/self-improvement goal you wish to achieve.

Second, write what skills or knowledge you need to help you achieve the goal.

Finally, write what expectations you have and what you hope to accomplish by achieving this learning goal.

Goal	Primary Skills Needed to Achieve Goal	The Outcome I Expect