

Professional Development Guarantees Success For Writers and Publishers

By Michael Angelo Caruso

(as published in "SPAN," newsletter for the Small Publisher
Association of North America, Denver, Colorado)

Profession development is the single most important thing you can do to improve work life. There is no faster way to increase revenue while improving the quality of your writing.

Many writers do not have formal training in running a business. While traditional schooling is important, a college degree can take years to earn. Tuition costs can make higher education prohibitive. Consequently, writers and publishers often learn time management strategies, conflict resolution techniques, assertiveness training and team leading skills by attending the School of Hard Knocks.

That's why other types of professional development can be a desirable alternative. Here are **5 Cool Ideas** for making professional development happen for you.

1. Audio programs make learning faster. Turn your commute time into education time. Buy, rent or borrow audio programs that will imprint you with expert advice you can't afford to miss. Do not underestimate this opportunity. I learned Spanish in my car when I was finishing my undergraduate degree.

Don't spend time rationalizing why motivational and instructional audio programs aren't for you, i.e., "I don't have a cassette player in my car," "My work commute is too short," or "I've never done that before." Instead, focus on how it can work, i.e., "I'll get a headphone player to listen while I exercise" or "I can get tapes from the public library for free."

2. Attending seminars and speeches will help you grow. Regular attendance at such events virtually guarantees your development will be consistent because you're likely to attend events that feature experts in your field. There are dozens of quality seminars and retreats on useful topics like negotiation, selling, computer skills and marketing.

3. Networking works. There are several ways to guarantee successful networking at any event. Meet people everywhere you go. Introduce yourself to at least ten new people at every luncheon and business function. Meet the keynote speaker at conferences. Arrive early and position yourself near the door so you can greet everyone who attends. Stand near the exit as people leave to meet people at the end of the event.

Practice purposeful communications by having two or three specific objectives for every event you attend. For example, when attending a conference last summer, I was

invited to speak at one of the luncheons and greet the association's new Executive Director. I mentioned to the Executive Director that I wanted to meet the keynote speaker. That's how I met Tony Robbins, the famous speaker and author.

4. Be a speaker at conferences. Don't make that face. Public speaking requires research and contemplation, two activities that are easily converted into professional development. Larger conferences may be looking for "name" presenters, but there are lots of opportunities to participate in breakout sessions, panel discussions, etc.

5. Think five move ahead. Most people know how to play checkers, a game that requires players to think only one move in advance. Many people manage their career in this manner, rarely investing in the future. Chess players, on the other hand, think five moves in advance. Forward-thinking people are much more likely to arrange training and grow from the experience.

Writers and publishers often toil in non-traditional work environments, but that doesn't mean they have to do without professional development. The trick is to think ahead as you enjoy a constant stream of new information and fresh opportunities.

Michael Angelo Caruso is President of the Edison House, a Detroit-based communication company. He is the author of "5 Cool Ideas for Better Working Living & Feeling," "Hmmm . . . Little Ideas With BIG Results and the audio book, "Dear Michael Angelo – A Father's Life Lessons To His Son." Mr. Caruso delivers 180 presentations per year. Click [here] to request booking information. Mr. Caruso can be reached at 248/546-9140 and at www.EdisonHouse.com.
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