

Highlight: CONDUCT

Summary

CONDUCT is a comprehensive model of professional development that begins with looking at your own career development and moves through a host of learning and development strategies.

Value

Managing your own learning and development has always been important. Doing so is becoming increasingly important, however, in a world that is rapidly changing, highly technological and very competitive. Many of the skills, knowledge and attitudes you have today may not be the ones you most need in a few years. Some researchers argue that the half-life (the time it takes before only half of your skills are useful in your role) of a role like yours is less than five years!

CONDUCT is a developmental model. It assumes that the learning strategies you use will change as you gain expertise. However, *CONDUCT* is not rigid. You will be able to make the model meet your specific learning and development needs.

Description

The *CONDUCT* model is divided into three components. The first, "Setting the Learning Stage," is all about preparing yourself and your environment so that learning comes easily and naturally. The second, "Managing Learning," involves navigating through the actual learning process, picking the best strategies to learn as your learning needs change. The final component, "Evaluating/

Monitoring," ensures that you are learning what you want to learn and are doing so effectively. The elements within each component are listed below.

1. Setting the Learning Stage

Career Building- helps you connect your learning with your career development

Self-Work - helps you reflect on your work and learning

Learning Receptivity - helps you make yourself more open to learning

Needs Analysis - helps you identify your learning needs

Overcoming Learning Barriers - helps you identify, remove and/or get around learning barriers

2. Managing Learning

Acquire- helps you map out how to best acquire a new ability

Apply - helps you make sure you practice an ability

Personalize - helps you hone and refine an ability

Extend - helps you truly master an ability

3. Evaluating/Monitoring

- helps you ensure your learning is most effective

Example

Consider the ability to use a word processing program. You might take a course to learn the program, and doing so will raise your proficiency level considerably. Your proficiency will rise even more if you have a chance to apply what you have learned after the course.

Perhaps you will use the program to write letters and reports. Once you are comfortable with your skills, you will begin personalizing your learning by finding out about special functions and codes that fit your needs. Doing so will make you even more proficient. Finally, you will extend what you learn by helping co-workers when they are using the program and feeling stuck. This will improve your proficiency even more.

Process

Step 1: Develop/Clarify your Preferred Future

What do you want life to be like? In the best of all worlds, where would you be living? Who would you be living with? What would your relationships be? What would you be doing in work and/or leisure? What kind of lifestyle do you want? Answering these questions is part of developing your preferred future.

Step 2: Understand your Current Position Relative to your Preferred Future.

Effective movement towards your preferred future requires a thorough understanding of your current assets: skills, knowledge, attitudes, activities, personal characteristics, relationships, finances and material assets.

Step 3: Identify Needs (gaps between current position and preferred future).

You need to be able to pinpoint your needs, particularly those related to learning.

Step 4: Set Short-Term Goals (particularly learning goals).

You need ways to make decisions about the short-term that will move you toward

your preferred future while being meaningful here and now. You may also need to be flexible with these goals. Again, learning is just one part of career building; you will have goals related to areas such as finances, work experiences and volunteer activities, too.

Step 5: Identify Barriers to Reaching your Goals.

There are often roadblocks on the paths towards goals. Identifying these is the first step in getting over, around or through them.

Step 6: Develop/Follow Action Plans.

Setting goals and reaching goals are two different things! Regardless of the type of goal you pursue, an action plan that identifies specific steps and dates will help you reach your goal.

Implementation

Some tasks that need to be learned may be more pressing on a day-to-day basis than others, regardless of how they stack up against your preferred future or your comfort level. The immediate demands of your current organization also need to be factored into your prioritization process.

You can learn only so much within any given time period. Your energy, time and budget will put constraints around your learning. Further questions to consider when ordering your learning needs include amount of time to learn, amount of time available (at work and outside of work), the need/availability of formal training, funds, and the ability to actually apply learning at the worksite.

