

New Year's Learning Ideas from Watermark Learning

Watermark Learning, Inc.

Industry Article

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It's the New Year—a new decade—a great time to get motivated and gear up for success! For some, losing weight and eating healthier top the list—again. But, what about resolving to learn something new? Perhaps you've been a victim of a recent corporate downsize, are considering a career change, are in line for a promotion, or you just want to be more successful in your job—training is a great way to increase personal satisfaction and reach professional goals.

Whether you take a series of project management or business analysis courses to get certified, attend a workshop, or read a book—you'll find learning to be one of the easiest, and perhaps most satisfying, New Year's resolutions to keep. Here are some tips to help you take full advantage of your learning potential this year.

1. Perform an Internal Audit—Before you can use learning as a tool to enhance your career goals, you must first perform a self-assessment. Take pen and paper and identify your professional weaknesses. Take a peek at that performance appraisal from last year—did your manager identify any skill deficiencies? Write these down. Seek out training classes that will help turn your weaknesses into strengths.

2. Determine a Learning Path and Timeframe—Learning a new skill is an admirable resolution; however you'll be more likely to keep it if you specify the type of skill(s) you want to acquire and then set a timeframe for completion. For example, if your goal is to position yourself for a promotion this year—identify the specific [courses](#) that will be helpful to gain the skills you need. Then, devote a portion of your business day/week/month to learning these new skills.

3. Make Learning 'Routine'—You won't stick to your resolutions if you don't make it a part of your life, like going to the gym or dieting. Block off your calendar and dedicate time for learning. Devote a couple hours a week to read an industry [blog](#) or newsletter. Map out training for the year, and work it into your schedule—even if you take one class at a time. The sooner self-development becomes a part of your workday, the sooner it will become a part of your life.

4. **Keep Current**—Keep up to date with industry trends by subscribing to [newsletters](#) and [blogs](#), attending networking events and workshops, and seeking out other [professional resources](#). This informal ‘education’ is a fantastic supplement to formal training and offers several free, quick resources at your fingertips.

5. **Go Above and Beyond**—Make 2010 *the year* to get your advanced degree or certification. Employers value certification because it demonstrates commitment to a profession and mastery of a skill or subject. It also leads to better visibility, job mobility, opportunities, and earning potential—even in the face of a tough job market.

6. **Informal Learning Opportunities**—Join an association, professional organization, or online network in your field. These informal environments provide valuable networking opportunities, career guidance, and knowledge on trends impacting your business.

7. **Attend webinars**—Find webinars on interesting topics or subjects that fill in a gap in your self-assessment. There are a variety of webinars being offered, often at no cost. Many of these webinars are short in length, but have substantive information. Many also offer additional handouts and templates.

8. **Leverage Online Communities**—Online networks provide an excellent way to focus on trends and topics of importance in your fields. In LinkedIn, subscribe to forums of interest to your profession. There are several informative ones that provide regular email digests. You can also participate in online discussions and use the “Question” feature to post and read questions and their answers. To follow thought leaders in your profession, “follow” them on Twitter or become a “fan” in Facebook.

9. **Attend conferences**—Conferences offer a way to obtain current information in your field, as well as many networking opportunities. Local and regional conferences are growing in popularity, as people look for lower-cost training opportunities.

10. Build Your People Skills—Interpersonal skills are often a factor that can tip the scales in your favor when interviewing for a job or getting a promotion. The way you communicate with co-workers, managers, and clients has a great impact on how successful you are in your job. Make a plan to polish up those [influencing skills](#) so you can be more effective facilitator and communicator.

Success through Education and Training

By spending more time learning, you can ensure you're getting the most out of your career, increasing your skills, and keeping your competitive edge. Make 2010 a year of success through learning. With the right training, achievement is no longer a goal but a guaranteed destination.

About Watermark Learning

Watermark Learning helps improve project success with outstanding project management and business analysis training and mentoring. We foster results through our unique blend of industry best practices, a practical approach, and an engaging delivery. We convey retainable real-world skills, to motivate and enhance staff performance, adding up to enduring results.

With our academic partner, Auburn University, Watermark Learning provides Masters Certificate Programs to help organizations be more productive, and assist individuals in their professional growth. Watermark is a PMI Global Registered Education Provider, and an IIBA Endorsed Education Provider.

Contact us at **800-646-9362** or at www.WatermarkLearning.com.