



HOW TO SKILL BUILD WITH A COMPANY IN 70 DAYS

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On an interview it's been my observation that questions of professional skill development rarely surface, unless asked by the candidate. In all the interviews I've personally been on, only about 2 employers asked me directly about how I'd like to grow with the organization. Every other time I was the one who posed the question.

It's important to ask this question early because you want to know a few specifics about the job you're willing to sign on for:

- *Its compensation*
- *The experience it offers you (including the roles, responsibilities, the potential inter-office politics you'll be dealing with, the work culture, the values, etc.)*
- *The skills you'll gain from the experience*

Rather than asking a broad question like, "Is there room for growth in this position?" you can ask, "**What are the professional development opportunities in this position?**" What you're after are specific modalities that can be deployed for your benefit on day one. These modalities can look like:

- *Mentorship with a senior peer*
- *Online training resources*
- *Direct mentorship with the supervisor*
- *A committee or peer group set up for specific training*
- *Many more we'll delve into in future posts*

Online Training for Skill-Building

Let's focus on this area first. A reasonably tech-savvy organization will have an option to participate in "online training," often for human resources modules. If they have HR modules they may also have them in other areas including communication, customer service, workplace conflict, critical thinking, etc. These modules tend to be basic and can go in-depth depending on the training's options. When completed, you may be able to print the *certificate of completion*. This is different from a "certification" in that you aren't certified by license to perform a role, but your certificate of completion proves you successfully finished learning a particular knowledge. This knowledge can be translated into a skill with practice.

Make this one of the first resources you find. Choose your modules one-by-one. Complete them. Print out the certificate of completion and save them in a folder. If you can, print out key pages for those modules that provide insights valuable to you.

Sometimes this may become challenging if your work space doesn't view this "training" as official work and prefer you to complete them during "off work" hours. I advocate selecting some of your lunchtime, strategically of course, to complete these modules and work the process.

Let's say if the company offers 50 modules on various topics and you completed 3 per week, in 3 months you'd have finished:

3 per week X 4 weeks per month = 12 modules completed per month

12 modules per month X 3 months = 36 out of 50 modules completed

You'd have more than 50% of the **entire company's available training modules done**. That's 36 certificates of completion in your binder, and within 3 months that's 36 different knowledge-skill building sessions you state you've completed, which are specifically oriented towards the company's organizational model. Impressed with yourself? You should be!

Next option:

LinkedIn Training Modules

If your company doesn't have any training modules of its own, LinkedIn is a way to obtain the training independently. The platform owns Lynda, an online learning platform that hosts courses on subjects in multiple disciplines. You also receive a certificate of completion when finished, and these courses are much more extensive. Not only can you absorb deeper knowledge from them, but you have continuous access so long as you have the Premium account on your profile.

Before you sign up for LinkedIn Premium (there's a monthly fee), ask your employer if they can support your development by granting you a company premium account. When you make the request, it will be important for you to do this formally:

- 1. Set up a meeting with your supervisor**
- 2. Prepare a basic 1-page description of your intent with this premium account**
- 3. List the knowledge areas you want to work with and how learning them will add value to your position and the organization overall**
- 4. Give yourself a timeline (I will start communication training modules on 1-2-18 and complete it by 1-10-18, for example)**

If this proves unsuccessful, you know then you'll have to take matters fully into your own hands. Skill build on your own. We'll explore in the coming posts about how to do this when the company doesn't see supplemental development worth investing in.