

Stay relevant, keep learning

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If the only constant is change, how can you stay relevant? Erica Hannath, Chief Talent Development Officer at DAN SSA, makes a strong case for learning to keep learning.



There is no finite set of skills that leaves you fully 'prepared' for life. During a time of rapid technological change, a more proactive strategy would be to learn to continuously learn over the course of your whole career.

A philosophy that has already started to crystallise at DAN SSA is to 'become the entrepreneur of your own career'. This means taking ownership of your growth and development and taking the lead in seizing opportunities to continuously learn.

Understanding the characteristics of entrepreneurs can inspire you to drive your career forward and keep learning. Here are 5 tips:

1. Be passionate

One of the keys to success is being passionate about what you do, and this is something entrepreneurs understand and embrace. They are always keen to seize opportunities that broaden their skills and knowledge. Look for opportunities to pivot your role. A digital marketing MD recently pivoted into a regional role, which was a challenge that allowed him to diversify his skill set. Even though he's not an expert, he has had extensive conversations with the regional head, researched the sector and is actively fine-tuning his skills as he learns.

2. Take risks

This may seem like unusual advice to grow your career, but this kind of courage can reap untold rewards. Start small by pitching new ideas or volunteering to take on a challenge, or two, that's outside of your comfort zone. You will gain new skills and recognition from your manager and peers. Our regional communications and marketing manager, Kelly Moses, recently took on a social-impact initiative, [Hear Her Voice](#). In the process she grew her global network, learnt about social impact and gained new skills.

3. Innovate

Entrepreneurs are always trying new things, brainstorming ideas, failing and trying again. This is an essential part of instigating meaningful change. Take the time to let the creative juices flow with your team and brainstorm ideas on your next

project. Learning through failure is important to innovation.

4. Persevere

Put goals in place for your career and persevere. Start by identifying the learning opportunities and experiences that will drive your career forward. Utilise formal learning channels such as Skills Academy, which is a fantastic resource and can be accessed through Workday. It has extensive courses on all topics – delivered by experts in the field – to develop skills and learn about new areas of our business.

5. Self-motivation

Don't wait for your manager to hand you the tools or provide opportunities for growth. You have to seek them out and embrace what your company is offering. Set up regular feedback discussions with your manager, have conversations about the experiences you need to grow and own the actions to do this.

The opportunities to continuously learn and drive your career forward are more available than ever, and DAN is working hard at investing in formal and informal channels and experiences to enable employee growth. Launching [Skill Academy](#) was a huge formal investment, and designing our new Talent Connect initiative (still to be launched) will provide new informal learning and growth channels. It's up to each and every one of us to seize the opportunities and become the entrepreneurs of our own careers.

Lessons in learning

Lani Carstens, MD of [John Brown Media South Africa](#), obtained her Master's Degree in Integrated Coaching from Stellenbosch University in 2019.

This is why she believes it's important to keep learning: "For me, there are two important aspects to lifelong learning: firstly, staying abreast of industry trends, staying relevant in skills and development, and keeping abreast of the changes that will impact you and your clients' business; and secondly (and equally important for me) is to keep developing and growing personally."

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