

IT'S A
BLOG!

Life Long Learning

Katie Ashford

BORN TO LEARN

As we navigate life, it 'teaches' us a myriad of lessons. Some lessons are easier than others and some of us destined to learn 'the hard way'; but the important thing is no lesson is ever lost.

“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.” - Albert Einstein

Lifelong learning is defined as *“all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective”*.

The basic premise is that it's not feasible to equip learners at school, college, or university with all the knowledge and skills they need to prosper throughout their lifetimes. Therefore, people need to continually enhance their knowledge and skills, in order to participate in a process of continuous vocational and professional development.

NEW SKILLS KEEP US RELEVANT

In the past, jobs were for life, but that's no longer the case. Technological advances, an increasingly digital world and now COVID -19, mean you need to reskill and upskill to stay in the game.

The “Age of Automation” is not just on its way; it's here. [The World Economic Forum](#) recently estimated that 1.4 million people will lose their jobs by 2026 as a result of technological change, with more than 70% of those job losses happening because the job type will cease to exist.

Unlike our male counterparts, who apply for a job when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, women apply only if they meet 100% of them.

So if you're not a *'fake it to you make it'* kind of gal, the only option is to invest in a program of study that will give you the accreditation and resulting confidence you need to apply for roles you want.

THIS WOMAN'S WORK

It's predicted that half of Fortune 500 CEOs will be women before 2030. In the digital age, leaders must excel at managing their ego, thinking and emotions, their emotional intelligence and their otherness — the ability to connect, engage and relate emotionally with others in positive ways. Women are more naturally positioned to do so.

Women are also amazing at adapting to new roles. We start, stop and restart careers after becoming mothers. We juggle family demands with work and are multi-tasking maestros, but in amongst all of this caring, it's easy to lose sight of your personal short and long-term career needs.

IT'S A BLOG!

TOO LATE?

If you haven't studied since you left school, college or university, you might think that you have missed the boat and even lost the skills required to take on further education, but that's not the case. [Your brain still has an astonishing ability to learn and master many new skills, whatever your age. And the effort to master a new discipline may be more than repaid in maintaining and enhancing your overall cognitive health. Like all muscles, the brain just needs exercising.](#)

TOO HARD?

Adding formal study on top of an already full plate is daunting, but it's doable. It just takes organisation, support and personal discipline to stay the course. Most institutions offer distance learning online courses that you can fit in around commitments. Maybe start with a shorter course and add additional units as your confidence grows?

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.” - Mark Twain

If a barrier to entry is cost, discuss with your employer what they can do by way of help with fees and days off to study in return for your commitment to stay post completion. And don't feel awkward asking - re-skilling workers is in their long-term interest too.

YOU'RE WORTH IT

“Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity.” - Aristotle

Investing in your professional development will significantly increase your odds in landing better paid, more fulfilling work. Put simply, knowledge is power. Power to retain the job you have, power to apply for the promotion or new job you want and the power to say no to the job you don't.

So back yourself and take the first step to see what's out there waiting for you. You won't regret it.

About the author

Katie Ashford is General Manager - Group Marketing and Communications at Ovato, Australasia's leading media, marketing and printing company.

She has worked in, on and around creating and selling print products and media for over 25 years encompassing consumer magazines, books, catalogues, partworks, continuity publishing and Direct Mail. She is a passionate marketer with an unquenchable thirst for lifetime learning.

She is a Certified Practising Marketer with The Australian Marketing Institute and to date has attained three degrees; BA (Hons) Social Studies (Geography, Economics and Statistics), a post graduate Masters in Marketing and most recently a Masters in Business Administration completed in fifteen months while balancing full time work and family life.