

Continuous Learning—New Beginnings

“To be successful, one must be willing to learn and apply new concepts and not be afraid of change” – Intel CEO Craig R. Barrett, when asked about his secret to success.

Our lives are filled with new beginnings. There’s a new year, where we create resolutions for what we want to do differently in the months ahead. There are birthdays with opportunities to consider what our lives will be like having achieved another year of experience under our belts. Have you ever noticed how beginning a new school year is full of “fresh start” possibilities for students? How about a new job? An anniversary? These events are opportunities for all of us to create new beginnings.

But don’t wait for New Years resolutions or other milestones to invest in “game-changing” actions. A vast majority of Fortune 500 leaders purposefully create learning opportunities continuously throughout their routine. Anne M. Mulcahy, CEO of Xerox, expects leaders throughout her company to model continuous improvement. She writes “I am still learning. That is an important mark of a good leader...to know you don’t know it all and never will.”

Learning means growing and improving. Improving (with a purpose and with a goal) eventually results in success. So, what can you do to achieve the best results? Here are some questions (and challenges) we explore with our world-class partners:

1. When was the last time you learned something truly valuable? (If it wasn’t in the past 24 hours, you’re sub-optimizing. It is time to make some changes!)
2. How often do you place yourself in situations where there is a big gap between what you know and what you need to know? (Identify specific insights you’d benefit most from and engage a relevant challenge – now!)
3. Have you identified a personal purpose and related goals? (If so, revisit them. If not, start today!)
4. What don’t you know, that you should know, that your colleagues know? (Ask them!)
5. Who do you admire? What do they know/do to be successful? (Research or connect with them for the information/experience.)

These questions (and your actions) can be a “fresh start” in creating a new routine of dynamic growth and improvement. Improvements don’t typically happen by accident. Actively pursuing opportunities and resources available to you will help you realize your world-class potential!