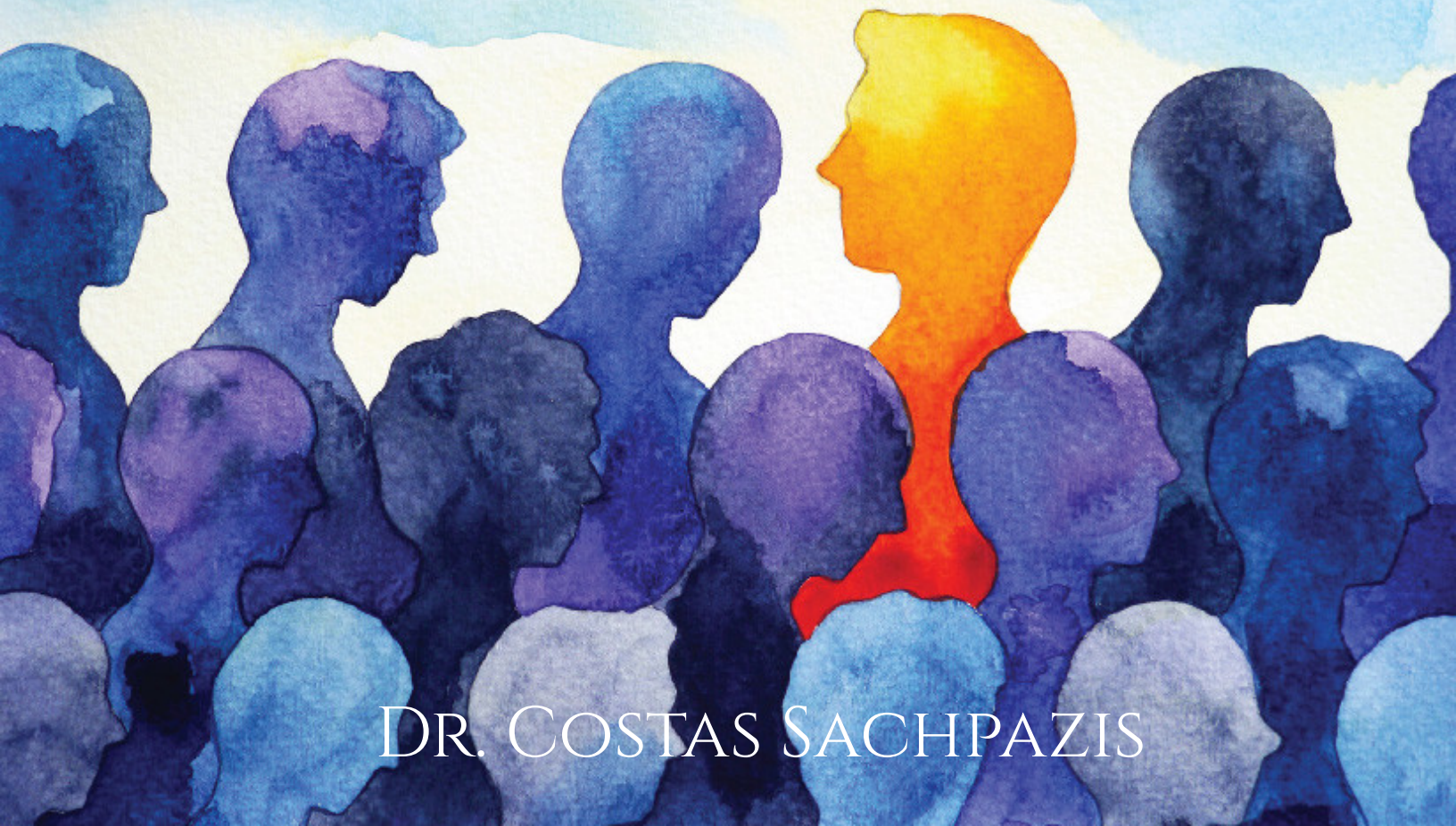


LIFE TIME LEARNING

The Importance of Continuing Education
and Professional Development



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The Importance of Continuing Education and Professional Development



Continuing education is one of the best investments you can make in your future. By learning new skills and techniques, you can open up a world of opportunity. To put it another way, professional development is something that should never be 'over'.

These days, you don't even need to sit inside a classroom to pursue learning opportunities. In this article, we'll go over some practical reasons why continuing education and professional development can pay off big time for you.

Let's get to it!



AN INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE TECH INDUSTRY

A lot of people consider education to be finite. You graduate from college, and that's it. Overachievers pursue Master's degrees and PhDs, but data shows that only about 13 percent of US adults pursue graduate-level studies.

Not everyone needs an advanced degree, but the idea that education is something you 'complete' isn't all that accurate. From a personal standpoint, learning keeps your mind sharp. Professionally, it can open up a broad range of opportunities you might not have access to otherwise.

Tech, in particular, is a brutally fast-paced field. The software, programming languages, and standards we use shift all the time. If you don't keep up with the changes, your skillset can become outdated in a matter of a few years.

The idea of returning to a classroom might not seem all that appealing to you. However, these days, you don't have to sit in a lecture hall to pursue advanced education. There's a wealth of online courses, professional development books, and other training materials you can turn to instead.

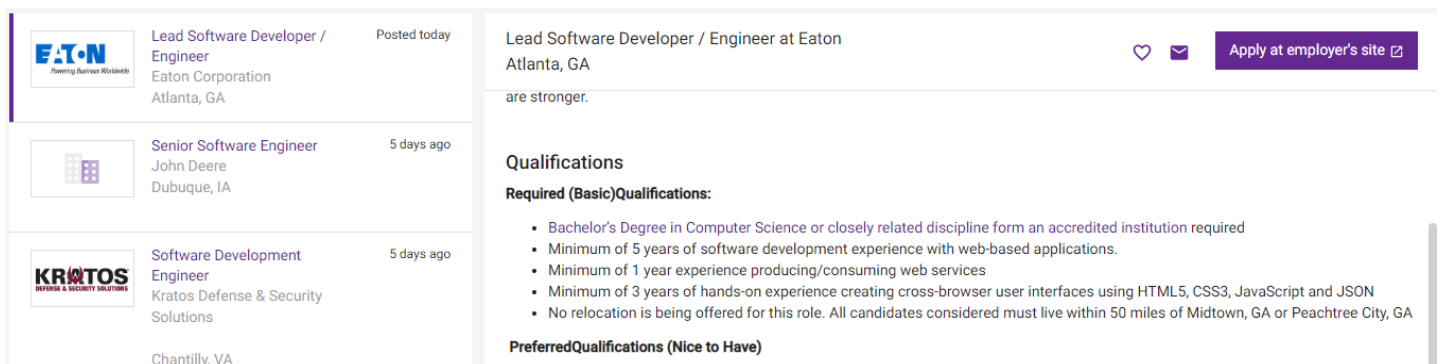
You also can attend tech networking events, such as WordCamps, as well as videoconferences and much more. The fact is, the web provides us with so many options to pursue professional development, it's hard to find a reason not to do so.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (3 KEY FACTORS)

Continuing education and professional development can help you stay relevant and climb the career ladder. Below, we've taken a dive into some of the most significant benefits of staying on top of your industry's latest advancements.

1. YOU GET ACCESS TO BETTER JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND MORE PAY

It shouldn't come as a surprise that there's a clear correlation between your level of education and the career opportunities available to you. The most obvious example of this is when a company lists a Bachelor's degree as a requirement in their job postings:



The screenshot shows a job listing for a Lead Software Developer / Engineer at Eaton in Atlanta, GA. The listing includes a list of qualifications, such as a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science, and preferred qualifications like 5 years of software development experience.

Company	Job Title	Posted
Eaton	Lead Software Developer / Engineer	Posted today
John Deere	Senior Software Engineer	5 days ago
KRATOS	Software Development Engineer	5 days ago

Lead Software Developer / Engineer at Eaton
Atlanta, GA

are stronger.

Qualifications

Required (Basic)Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science or closely related discipline form an accredited institution required
- Minimum of 5 years of software development experience with web-based applications.
- Minimum of 1 year experience producing/consuming web services
- Minimum of 3 years of hands-on experience creating cross-browser user interfaces using HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript and JSON
- No relocation is being offered for this role. All candidates considered must live within 50 miles of Midtown, GA or Peachtree City, GA

PreferredQualifications (Nice to Have)

Continuing education qualifies you, at least on paper, for a broader range of positions. The more specialized your skillset and the more experience you have, the better the pay range you can aim for as well.

To give you an idea of how this plays out, consider that the top 25 percent of, say, web developers in the US have an average annual salary of \$93,670. Compare this number to the median, which is \$67,990, and the benefits of seniority and an advanced skillset become evident.

That said, there are plenty of companies that pay more attention to personal portfolios and demonstrable skills than degrees and qualifications. This means online courses and other self-learning resources can still give you an edge when it comes to job hunting.



2. IT KEEPS YOU AT THE FOREFRONT OF YOUR FIELD

The speed at which the landscape changes in the tech industry is brutal. Frameworks come in and out of fashion fast. Programming languages fall out of favor. Plus, employers have ever-growing lists of requirements. As a result, it's not all that uncommon to learn new skills on the job.

Web developers, in particular, go through this all the time when their employers decide to work with new software or other tools. However, you can't always rely on your company to provide the best opportunities for your continuing education and professional development.

The Importance of Continuing Education and Professional Development

For example, in 2019, some skills that can increase your hireability as a web developer include experience with Backbone.js, AngularJS, and .NET. If your company doesn't use any of these libraries or frameworks, it's up to you to seek out relevant learning opportunities on your own time.

This may seem unnecessary if you're not using these skills in your current position. However, ignoring the latest development trends could set you back significantly should you choose to leave your company down the line.

Additionally, keeping up with changes in best practices and new software that becomes available could help you improve your current company's procedures. This may win you favor with your employer. Plus, you can position yourself as an expert within your team and use that to negotiate for better pay.



3. YOU'LL BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO LEAD TEAMS AND MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

If you're known for always having a finger on the pulse of the latest developments in your field, coworkers will likely come to you with questions. This favorable reputation may put you in the perfect position to seek out leadership opportunities.

However, if you're already in a leadership position, staying on top of industry advancements is still important. You have a responsibility to provide the guidance your team needs to succeed. Continuing to educate yourself can help you do just that.

Advanced knowledge you've gleaned from continuing education or professional development can also help you decide which frameworks or languages are best for a given project. This can help your business save money and time.

Ideally, you'll want to regularly research what skills are hot in your industry. It's also wise to look up quality learning resources and carve out some time in your schedule to peruse them. If you have the willpower to do that, you'll reap the professional rewards for years to come.



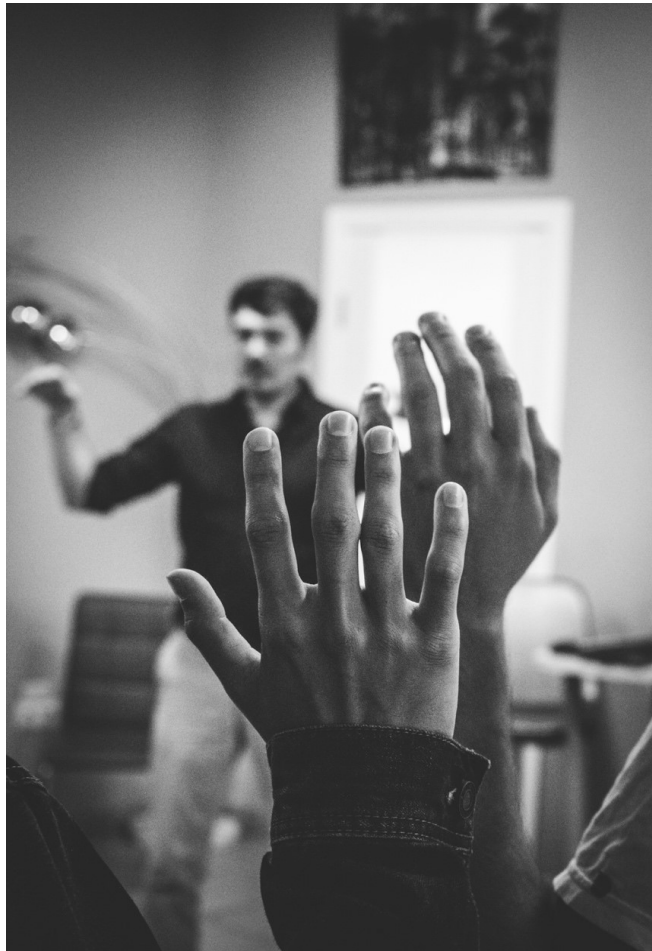
CONCLUSION

Many people talk about being 'done' with school once they graduate. However, if you stop pursuing learning opportunities once you start your career, you might get stuck in a rut.

Continuing education is key to your personal growth, but it can also help you succeed in your career by:

1. Giving you access to better job opportunities.
2. Keeping you at the forefront of your field.
3. Preparing you to lead teams and make informed decisions.

Do you have any questions about how to pursue continuing education? Ask away by emailing to info@geodomisi.com



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are often asked to describe the importance of continuing professional development. Why is CPD important and why does it matter?

You've finished your degree. Check.

You've completed all your practical experience requirements so that you can graduate. Check.

Your new job is all lined up and ready to go. Mission accomplished.

It's fair to say the first part of your mission is well and truly accomplished. Sit back and give yourself a pat on the back. But don't take too long about it or you'll be lagging behind your colleagues. The same is true for professionals with many years experience in the workplace.

Continuing professional development is important because it ensures you continue to be competent in your profession. It is an ongoing process and continues throughout a professional's career.

The ultimate outcome of well planned continuing professional development is that it safeguards the public, the employer, the professional and the professional's career.