

Expand Your Skills



During uncertain economic times, many people focus on broadening their skills or reevaluating their careers. Within the ASTD community, it's clear that during these challenging times our members are on the move—taking on new responsibilities, starting their own business-

es, breaking into new industries, or moving into different sectors of the economy such as government agencies and not-for-profit organizations.

Some of the questions that members have been asking recently are What skills do I need to succeed today? How can I further my career or grow my business?

During my keynote remarks at ASTD's International Conference and EXPO in June, I described four skill areas that, on the surface, seem rather basic. But in practice, they're critical to your success as a workplace learning and performance professional no matter where you are in your career. These skills are having deep knowledge of the entire business ecosystem; supporting continuous learning to help individuals and organizations grow and succeed; forging strong relationships

and partnerships with other stakeholders in your organization; and being resilient, flexible, and adaptable to change.

Many of you have told me that being a successful learning and performance professional requires a balancing act. You develop the skills and abilities of people, and in a real sense, help them realize their potential. At the same time, you must show how your work is connected to bottom-line performance. Add to that list of duties the need to continually update your technology know-how, stay on top of the current industry trends, and understand developments in the supplier community, and you've got a full plate, to say the least. Developing those skill areas can give you the edge you need to rise to new challenges, connect your work to organizational performance measures, and get a seat at the strategy table.

I encourage you as you move forward to take time for your own skill development. Be sure to create a development plan that will be beneficial to you personally and to your organization. Concentrate on the skill areas I described and think of your development plan as an integral part of your overall career development. In the end, developing those skills could mean the difference between being relegated to the sidelines of your organization or being an indispensable team player when important business decisions are being made.

The choice is yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ina Sung". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "g".

President and CEO
ASTD