

PART TWO: Professional Development
Building Your Skills

Engage professional development by building your skills and discovering your talents. Opportunities to learn include:

- Continuing education
- IABC Accreditation, certificates
- Workshops, seminars, conferences
- Reading
- Networking, and
- Volunteering.

In addition, there are many opportunities in your everyday activities that can enhance your skills and build your confidence in your communication practice. For example:

<p>Level 1 – Entry Coordinator (1-4 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask your manager to give you projects with S.M.A.R.T. (Specific/Measurable/Action-oriented/Realistic/Timely) objectives; design S.M.A.R.T. objectives if the project has none. ➤ Ask to be involved in a hiring interview process. ➤ Master a time management system. ➤ Capture meetings notes for a group and develop summary points, next steps and action items. ➤ Discuss work ideas/techniques with peers. ➤ Find ways to assist with communication work load in your company or department. ➤ Set personal goals and planning to practice project planning. ➤ Assist colleague/manager with planning a project. ➤ Ask for low risk event/project to develop skills. ➤ Ask to work a news conference. ➤ Develop critical thinking skills by taking past projects and evaluating outcomes. ➤ Do simulation training via tutorials or planning software. ➤ Join a brainstorming activity at work or in an organization. ➤ Observe outstanding communicators in action. ➤ Immerse yourself: ask to read communication competition entries from colleagues and others in the profession; learn about the other communication functions. ➤ Volunteer to participate on committees.
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ACCREDITATION

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<p>Level 2 – Entry Manager/ Specialist (5-9 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Begin to pursue IABC accreditation. ➤ Develop routine or standard operating procedures (SOP) for a communication function. ➤ Ask supervisor to assign you specific projects in your area of interest. ➤ Observe a vendor review meeting. ➤ Ask to manage communication support staff or intern. ➤ Capture routine communication activities and develop templates for them. For instance, develop an activity report or event checklist. ➤ Find opportunities to do presentations and/or public speaking. ➤ Serve in a financial function in extra-curricular, non-profit or professional association such as IABC. ➤ Write an article about an organizations vision, mission, goals and values. ➤ Ask to be on a crisis team. ➤ Offer to develop a new media channel or help develop a communication measurement tool for an organization or group. ➤ Gather and organize relevant info for a meeting. ➤ Prioritize activities and delegate lower value tactical activities. ➤ Assist in developing, managing and measuring projects. ➤ Assist in engaging cross-divisional teams. ➤ Develop working relationships within your communication group and throughout your organization.
<p>Level 3 – Mid Management/ Specialist (10-15 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coach others to pursue IABC accreditation. ➤ Ask to be part of a task force that investigates, recommends or implements new procedures. ➤ Write a white paper on industry trends. ➤ Ask to be responsible for an audit of your communication area. ➤ Confirm your specialty skills and develop as a subject-matter expert (SME). ➤ Recommend ideas to improve efficiency and effectiveness within your department or company and manage change. ➤ Ask to work on a research project that involves integration of processes or departments. ➤ Serve as a mentor to Level 1 and 2 practitioners. ➤ Write communication case studies, ➤ Volunteer to judge communication competitions. ➤ Determine a need and offer to develop a communication training program for non-communicators or another communication program that benefits the company.

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<p>Level 4 – Senior Communicator (16+ years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Develop a network of subject-matter experts (SMEs) in cross knowledge areas to enhance innovation and creativity.➤ Contribute thought leadership through articles, seminars, workshops and conferences.➤ Serve on boards of an organization or professional association such as IABC.➤ Write a book.➤ Volunteer to lead a group within your company or an outside organization.➤ Manage communication projects, lead committees or supervise work of others.➤ Speak at local colleges or universities.➤ Coach younger practitioners.
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