



5 Ways We Get Professional Development Wrong

1. PROBLEM- *We define ‘professional development’ too narrowly*

Too many organizations- equate professional development with conferences and trainings. Although these are effective parts professional development, they are not the only ones.

HOW TO FIX IT- *Broaden the definition of professional development*

Professional development can include mentoring, reading, coaching, studying, blogging or mentoring, just to name a few. Be open to the many different ways staff learn and grow.

2. PROBLEM- *Our professional development “plans” are piecemeal*

Professional growth opportunities are often scattered and do not appear to have any context or connection making them less impactful and meaningful.

HOW TO FIX IT- *Create an intentional plan for each staff member*

At the beginning of each year, staff should work with their supervisor on a professional development plan for the year that includes desired outcomes.

3. PROBLEM- *We tell our employees which professional development to take*

Often, we tell our team members which conferences they are required to attend and when the mandatory training will be held. This disempowers employees and reduces their buy-in.

HOW TO FIX IT- *Give staff more power and voice into their own development*

No one knows your employees better than they know themselves. Involve them in the process of designing and choosing professional development opportunities that will work for them.

4. PROBLEM- *We don’t prioritize professional development*

By not investing time and money into our employees’ growth, we not only stifle that growth but we send the message that we do not believe our employees are worth investing in.

HOW TO FIX IT- *Invest time and money into professional development*

Trust that intentionally investing in your staff will come back to the organization in a significant way. Staff who believe they are valued and invested in will stick around.

5. PROBLEM- *We don’t model appropriately*

“Do as I say and not as I do” doesn’t work for our children and it doesn’t work for our employees. We must take the time for our own professional development.

HOW TO FIX IT- *Make our own professional development a priority*

As you have your staff share their learning from professional development, do the same. Model the importance and benefit of professional development.

Professional development benefits both the employee who receives it and the organization who invests in it. Take the time to evaluate how your organization currently provides professional development opportunities and where there is room for growth. Make a commitment to invest in growth opportunities for your team and know that the benefits will far outweigh the costs.