

## Summer Is Over, And Fall Is Upon Us ... Already

Recently, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Ulliance, Todd Lancaster, shared some of his thoughts about the inevitability of CHANGE and how this relates to one of the Ulliance core values, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. We would like to take the time to share with our readers as we re-vamp our routines and the summer quickly turns into fall.

Now that kids are back at school again and embarking on their next year of learning I try to remember what it was like as I observe my kids going through the same routine I once did. It's an exciting time filled with change. There are new teachers and new classes with new subjects. Perhaps even a new school with new kids. The kids themselves have changed as well. They may be a little taller and have matured a little bit---- *hopefully*. Styles have changed too as what may have been trendy last year is out this year. And, of course, now they may have homework.

With us, as adults, it's a little different now. Styles are not nearly as important as they once were. We may want to be relevant, but don't need to be on the cutting edge of fashion. Most of us don't want to be any bigger this year than we were last year. The changes from year-to-year are not nearly as dramatic and hopefully we don't have a lot of homework.

Some things, however, should never change. One constant is that change is inevitable. As organizations continue to grow there will continue to be new faces, new challenges, new programs and services, and new technology to go along with it. The most important thing is, like the students going back to school, how are we continuing our learning? Or better yet, how to be a lifelong learner. Just because we are no longer in school is no excuse to not continually sharpen the proverbial saw.

One of the Ulliance core values is continuous improvement. One of the ways we can do that is through professional development. Professional development will take your career to the next level and help you add massive value in your role and in your department. Follow these four steps and you can become an expert in your field quickly:

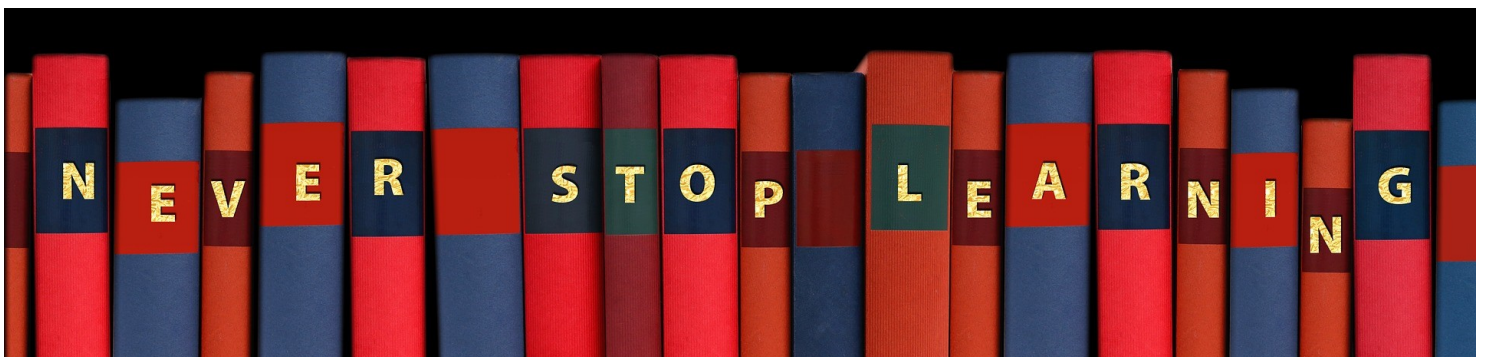
**Step 1: Study.** Your first step to expertise is to identify the world's three top experts on a topic/skill and to read one book by each expert. (You could also participate in their online courses, live seminars, or training programs.) Just make sure you learn from the right people. Thanks to the Internet, anyone can self-publish a book or create an online course and call themselves an "expert" on any topic. Learning from unqualified sources will actually stunt your development. Make sure you learn from the world's best.

**Step 2: Apply.** While you will definitely benefit just from absorbing the wisdom of thought leaders, you can't become a true expert on a topic/skill until you *apply* your new knowledge. For example, you can't become an expert on public speaking just by reading about public speaking; you have to speak in public. You can't become an expert on project management just by reading about project management; you have to manage projects. You can't become an expert on LinkedIn just by reading books about LinkedIn; you have to use LinkedIn firsthand. By applying what you learn through your initial study, you'll deepen your understanding of the material and fill in some of the inevitable gaps found even in the world's best books or training programs.

**Step 3: Summarize.** Before any exam in college, part of the studying process is to go through textbooks and class notes and create a concise review sheet of the major ideas and concepts. This step forces you to identify the key points and to translate the ideas from the authors and professors into your own words. So, after you read your three books (or take a course, attend a seminar, etc.) and after you apply what you have learned, you should create a brief summary of your new knowledge. This will deepen your learning even further and leave you with a very concise, valuable resource to refer to for years to come.

**Step 4: Teach.** After studying, applying, and summarizing what you have learned, you can strengthen your mastery by teaching your findings to others. You can "teach" your topic by writing articles about what you have learned, by delivering presentations about what you have learned, or simply by sharing your ideas informally with friends, family, or colleagues.

According to a study by a publishing firm called The Jenkins Group, 42% of adults never even read one book after graduating college! If you read three books on a topic, apply what you have learned, summarize your findings, and teach your new knowledge to others (by writing or speaking), you will know more about that topic than more than 99% of the population, classifying you as a true expert. The payoff in personal satisfaction, professional recognition, and financial compensation will be well worth the effort.



## Ulliance Can Help

How well we handle change doesn't only affect us, it also affects our friends and family. If you'd like some free, confidential assistance with this, call Ulliance and speak with one of our Life Advisor Consultants, who would be happy to discuss the changes in your life and how best to cope with them.