5 PRACTICES TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR CAREER

Many organizations have studied the future of work. Several of these organizations identified strategies for how employers and workers can prepare. These five practices are among those that are often recommended. Anyone can begin today to act on these practices.

OKLAHOMA CareerTech

Practice 1: Strive to be open.

Being open may sound easy, but it is surprisingly tough for most people. However, it may be the key to preparing for the future of work. Because the future of work is all about change, being open to change is critical. Change often involves risk — not a risk of danger, but a risk of failure. Avoiding taking risks because of the potential for failure can stop people from embracing the future of work.

Practice 2: Learn for a living.

In the future of work, school is always in session. Success in our work means we must always be learning. For most people working today, learning was about *learning to be*. We developed skills that would last us for a lifetime of work. In the future of work, learning must be about *learning to become*, over and over again. Learning to earn in the future of work must resemble riding a wave. As a wave begins to shrink and loses its power to propel us in our work, we need to spot the next wave, catch it and ride it. That next wave could be a new work task or assignment, a chance to learn how to operate a new machine or a training program for a technology that is becoming essential in our field.

Practice 3: Assemble a diverse network.

Everyone has a network, by chance or by design. Individuals often use their networks to learn about job opportunities. To succeed in the future of work, your network should play a larger role. It must be diversified with the purpose of helping you learn on the fly, staying on top of trends and looking out for opportunities.

Practice 4: Be greedy about experiences.

One of the ways to learn for a living is to learn from diverse experiences at work. Toward this purpose, greed is good. The kinds of experiences to be greedy about are the ones that make you just a little bit uncomfortable. If an experience makes you feel like your head is just above water, you may have found a growth opportunity! It turns out that one of the ways that people learn best is by completing *stretch assignments* that challenge their skills.

Practice 5: Build your adaptability muscles.

The future of work requires workers to be more flexible and more adaptable. It's easy to think about resilience when thinking about adaptability. Both are attributes of value to employers. However, resilience usually has more to do with *surviving*; adaptability has more to do with *thriving*. Because the future of work is about change, adaptability can help us to succeed in a new place, rather than helping us to do well in the same place. Building our adaptability muscles is all about responding positively to challenges or setbacks.