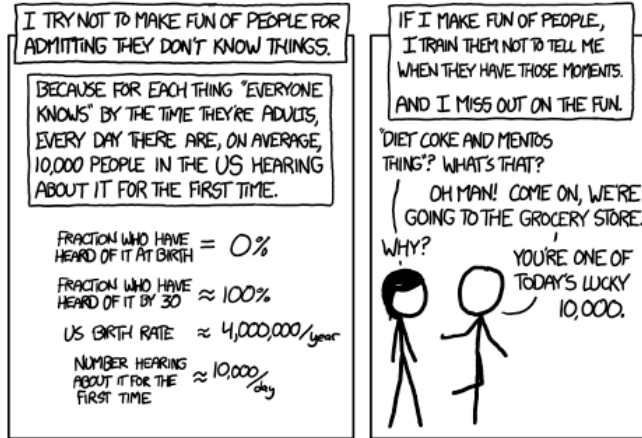


How to Strive to Be One of the Day's 10,000 (Always Be Learning)

The Best Habit of the Most Productive Programmers (and People) We Know

Chase Technology
Consultants
March 25, 2014



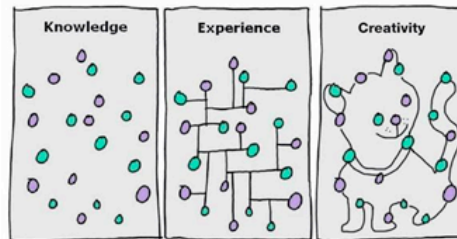
Another article caught our eye during our inspiration expedition last weekend that we thought was also worthy of its own CareerJuice follow-up: Danielle Sacks' "The Secret Weapon of the Most Productive Executives."

"Some executives have personal trainers. Others have therapists," says Sacks, "Then there are the really productive ones, who have Brad Grossman."

Readers learn that Brad Grossman turned his reputation as a "human CliffsNotes" into [Grossman & Partners](#), a cultural think-tank/do-tank business considered by some of the top execs as their secret weapon to productivity – but, some [Fast Company](#) commenters [note](#), not much else.

Sack's article reads more testimonial than informative, they observed, with many unmet opportunities to expand on this interesting subject. For example, how does Grossman learn effectively and efficiently? What strategies does he use to help others become smarter? What is the job market like for a professional autodidact?

Unfortunately, we can't answer these questions for you. But we can talk from a technical employer's perspective about why it's important for you as an IT professional to always be learning, and advise you on what you can do if you can't afford someone like Brad Grossman to help you:



It's essential to anyone's career to continuously keep up with tech upgrades, changing business models and processes, and other trends and to explore a variety of interests. Employers are attracted to people who demonstrate that they are proactive in their own development and who have a variety of experiences that'll bring a unique perspective and new approach to problems.

We've also [mentioned](#) before how it's not uncommon for professionals in the technology industry to change jobs every two to three years to remain current in a highly competitive job market. While it is true that it's to your advantage as a technologist to take advantage of opportunities to expand on and gain technical knowledge in different work environments and cultures, you **don't** necessarily have to leave your current job to do so.

There are many things you can do to keep your programming skills fresh and sharp and to become a well-rounded IT professional while employed:

- **Read a book.** As small a change as choosing one subject per year and reading a book a month on the topic can have a huge impact on your career and life, career coach and former Fortune 500 executive Lisa Quast has said. Here are [12 reading suggestions for tech enthusiasts and geeks](#).

Not a book person? Check out these useful [programming and coding websites and other online resources](#) for tech professionals!



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- **Take a class.** Enrolling in a course whose subject matter interests you can differentiate you from other job candidates. In addition to the well-known big players in the MOOC space, we encourage you to check out OpenCulture.com, which offers over 800 free online courses in the liberal arts and sciences from the world's leading universities like Stanford, Yale, MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, and Oxford that you can take at your own pace. They have a pretty expansive list of course offerings for those interested in computer science and artificial intelligence!
- **Ask questions.** There's always something to learn, or a way you can do something more efficiently and effectively. "Try never to be the smartest person in the room. And if you are, I suggest you invite smarter people...or find a different room," Michael Dell once said, "In professional circles it's called networking. In organizations it's called team building. And in life it's called family, friends, and community. We are all gifts to each other, and my own growth as a leader has shown me again and again that the most rewarding experiences come from my relationships."
- And of course, **attend educational events, company open-offices, and networking opportunities.** In addition to helping you expand your current skill set and experience a variety of challenges, they're great opportunities to gain exposure to different people and businesses and conduct market research.

Below are some tech conferences, workshops, and meet-ups happening in April in the New England / Greater Boston Area. Many thanks to [Chase Technology Consultants'](#) IT Talent Acquisition Specialist [David Brockmann](#) and Staffing Assistant Intern [Bill](#) for the compilation assistance! **If you're attending or hosting an IT meetup this coming month or in the near future that we neglected to include, we'd love to know so we can add it to the list:**

- [Big Data TechCon](#) – March 31-April 2
- Boston BI User Group's ["An Introduction to Data Mining"](#) – April 1
- Greater Boston Chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery's ["The Cloud Meets Bluetooth Smart"](#) – April 1
- The Boston Python User Group's ["PyCon Rehearsals 3: Helicopters and Open edX"](#) – April 1
- [BuildYourBiz 101: Becoming an Entrepreneur 101 for Students and Technology](#) – April 2
- [BuildYourBiz 201: Building Your First Store App for IT Pros](#) – April 3
- [Ruby on Rails Brunch](#) – April 6
- The Boston Python User Group's ["PyCon Rehearsals 4: Shelling Out and Games for Science"](#) – April 7
- Boston Cloud Services Meetup's ["Cloud Foundry, a PaaS"](#) – April 7
- Boston Ruby Group's ["History of a Thriving Codebase" / "Ruby on Robots"](#) – April 8
- [Boston TechBreakfast](#) – April 8
- [TechCrunch Boston Pitch-Off Event](#) – April 8
- Constant Contact's ["Let's Meetup and Make Stuff"](#) – April 9
- Openstack Boston's ["Auto-scaling applications on OpenStack using Cloud Foundry as Your PaaS"](#) – April 9
- Boston Predictive Analytics' ["Career Analytics with Beginner API Tutorial"](#) – April 9
- The Boston CocoaHeads Group's [monthly meetup](#) – April 10
- [Fast Company's "Innovation Uncensored"](#) – April 10
- Granite State (NH) SharePoint Users [monthly meeting](#) – April 10
- New England Java Users Group's ["Software Architecture Patterns"](#) – April 10
- Boston Software Engineers' ["Better Android Development"](#) – April 10
- The Boston Java Meetup Group's ["Java and Big Data Analytics: SciDB and How to avoid Big Hassles"](#) – April 15
- IT-Pro User Group's [monthly meetup](#) – April 16
- Greater Boston Association of Information Technology Professionals' [monthly meeting](#) – April 17
- The Boston MySQL Meetup Group's [monthly meetup](#) – April 21
- Sitecore User Group – New England's ["Hedgehog Team Development for Sitecore 5.0"](#) – April 23
- Women Who Code's [Hack Night!](#) – April 24
- [An Event Apart](#) – April 28-30
- Tech in Motion: Boston's ["Spring Forward Demo & Drinks"](#) – April 29

Remember: You don't always have to think or do "comp sci" to expand on your technical knowledge and experiences. For instance, taking an art class at your local paint bar could give you an idea for a new product or feature to develop, or perhaps make you realize how similar artists are to programmers. Exploring interests outside of programming can help you change the way you look at and approach a problem and become a more productive and creative technologist overall. **And while there is no one-size-fits-all advice when it comes to best learning practices, if you want to learn more about research-backed methods on how to learn and memorize more effectively, check out [this article](#).**

Blogging Forward,
CareerJuice

Cartoon Credit: ["Ten Thousand"](#) by Randall Munroe (xkcd.com)
Photo Credit: [Assembl](#)



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