

Professional Growth: Do You See What I See?

By: Dr. Jill Bella

Note: This resource is part of a self-reflection series focused on professional development. Read the rest of the series [here](#).

“Quality is a moving target” is a phrase we like to use at the McCormick Center. Simply put, it means we believe in a norm of continuous quality improvement. Whatever level a program is operating at (e.g., poor, fair, good, excellent) there is always room for improvement.

We believe this is also the case with staff. We all have room to grow. Turns out not only do we believe it, but staff want it. [A poll conducted by Gallup](#) indicates that among baby boomers, gen Xers, and millennials, offering professional development experiences on the job is a key factor they consider when applying to an organization (41%, 44%, and 59% respectively). The question is, does your organization encourage and support this growth?

In the book, [A Great Place to Work](#) the organizational climate dimension of professional growth is defined as, “The degree of emphasis placed on staff’s professional growth. The availability of opportunities to increase professional competence.” Not only is professional growth a way to improve knowledge and skills, it also contributes to job satisfaction and can ultimately improve the quality of the organization.

Points to Ponder

If I were to walk through your program, what would I observe that would demonstrate that your organization values professional growth? Take a few minutes to reflect and write down everything that you can think of that would demonstrate this value (e.g., meetings related to career development, bulletin boards or mailboxes with information about upcoming workshops, specific policies related to staff development).

How many did you come up with? Would someone visiting your program conclude that professional development is a strongly held value after taking a tour?

Once you have tallied up what you wrote down, complete the resource, “[Professional Development Checklist](#).” What additional ideas could you add to the checklist?

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and education. Dr. Bella is also the co-author of several books and trainer's guides including A Great Place to Work and Inspiring Peak Performance.