Journaling as a tool for professional development


development

Where have you been? Where are you going? How far have you come?
These are questions you can answer by keeping a journal of your professional activities and accomplishments. A professional journal doesn’t have to be difficult, and you don’t have to spend a lot of time on it. Even a few lines a day, no more than 15 or 20 minutes spent writing, can give you a real advantage at work and in your studies.

What’s the difference between a professional journal and a diary?
A professional journal focuses specifically on activities and relationships at work and school, while a diary records personal thoughts and feelings about all aspects of life. Whether you keep a diary or not, you should consider keeping a professional journal.

Journal and Journey
Words that sound the same often share meaning. Journal and journey both come from the Latin word for day. Writing every day about your activities, about your journey through each day, will help you stay focused on your goals. Your journal is also a permanent record, a souvenir from your journey through life that will help you remember milestones.

The importance of free-writing and sequential thought
When we think sequentially, one idea leads naturally to another. If we are worried or anxious, sequential thinking can shut down, and we will find ourselves stuck, repeating thoughts and actions even when they no longer serve us.

A journal is one of the best ways to think things through by kick-starting sequential thought. If you find yourself stuck or if you want to move forward and don’t know where to go, free-writing in your journal will allow you to move past your sticking point.

Benefits of Journaling

Short-term
- Try out ideas and build confidence
- Sharpen your writing skills and become a better communicator
- Find direction and gain a new perspective on everyday events

Long-term
- Remember accomplishments, awards and recognition
- Connect with your past and keep track of progress
- Solve complex problems by working through ideas over time

When to journal
Before and after work or school
In preparation for big meetings and events

What to include in a professional journal
Expectations and aspirations
Success and failure