

## Top 10 Approaches for Professional Development

*Clinical Informatics Insights* asked work group members to share their top approaches for professional development. **Thomas W. Andrews**, RN-BC, MS; **Karen Carroll**, RN, PhD, NEA-BC; **Carole Crabtree**, RN, MSN; and **Julie Luengas**, RN-BC, MBA, shared the following strategies for success:

1. **Set goals.** Don't be afraid of setting the educational and professional development bar too high. See the big picture, identify your overall goal and then build a strategy to achieve.
2. **Be a lifelong learner.** Actively read professional journals, industry e-newsletters and books, and attend local, national and international educational conferences and events.
3. **Earn certification(s).** Demonstrate expertise and broaden your skill sets through certification and advancement opportunities.
4. **Stay current.** This industry is constantly moving forward; stay on top of new trends, studies and data, and breaking news.
5. **Join a professional organization(s).** Whether local or national, the organization should correspond to your goals and connect you to professionals with similar aspirations. Where possible participate in committees, work groups and on boards.
6. **Develop a network of industry colleagues.** Connections are great resources for instant assistance and advice for business issues, as well as for best-practice and knowledge sharing.
7. **Find a mentor.** Mentors possess wisdom that only vast experience can provide. They may invite their protégés to events and introduce them to fellow industry leaders. Be sure to meet regularly, and discuss professional development and career goals.
8. **Be a mentor.** This is an opportunity to advance leadership skills and learn by teaching. Protégés challenge mentors to stay up-to-date and continue to grow professionally.
9. **Ask questions.** Know your limitations and when to ask for an expert's guidance. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Seeking answers often yields more insight than anticipated.
10. **Know your field.** Be credible; know how to clearly articulate responsibilities, contributions to an organization and to the industry, in your area of expertise.

**NOTE:** This article appeared in the February 2010 issue of *HIMSS Clinical Informatics Insights*. [Subscribe online.](#)