



## CAREER VISION

### **Lifelong Learning Boosts Employability in the Changing Workplace**

The phrase "Miscellaneous duties as assigned" used to be the standard catch phrase at the end of most job descriptions. Jobs were narrowly and specifically defined. The occasional task that an employee might have to perform that was not outlined in his job description was conveniently covered in this last sentence.

Today, most of us might find ourselves chuckling at how dramatically things have changed. More commonly heard now is "My entire job can be described as miscellaneous duties as assigned!" Job descriptions are moving targets these days. In fact, in some companies like Daimler Chrysler's Chrysler Group, individual job descriptions are not maintained for the salaried workforce anymore. Assignments and roles change so quickly in response to changing business demands, it becomes a Herculean task to keep a job description database current.

In years past, stability was a characteristic of the world of work. Procedures, information, jobs, and organizations were established and provided continuity. Education was completed in the first 14 - 22 years of one's life, followed by a long career occasionally punctuated by short-term job training.

Today, jobs, companies, and technology are disappearing and being created simultaneously. To remain current and maintain a competitive advantage in the human capital marketplace, an individual is challenged to continually learn.

People return to school at every age to enrich their skills and knowledge for their current positions. Some prepare themselves for new jobs or career changes, moving them forward into new opportunities and technology.

Aptitudes are the tools individuals can use to make informed educational and career choices. Just as a pneumatic nailer, wrench, and level are tools that can be used for building a cabinet, a sailing ship, or a skyscraper, so too, an aptitude profile can be used to segue into different occupations. Aptitudes provide the foundation for learning new tasks quickly and easily. Joining aptitudes with interests, personality style, and values, an individual is able to respond proactively to the changes in the workplace. Self-knowledge provides a sense of control in the midst of rapid change, and there is a peace-of-mind that comes from knowing one is staying ahead of the learning curve.

We can be assured that we will be challenged to continue to learn new tasks and information throughout our lives. Successful careers belong to flexible, curious learners who are prepared for opportunities because they know themselves and where they make their best contribution. As Peter Drucker, the father of modern management stated, "Knowledge is choice."

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