

Top 10 Tips: Everyone's a Mentor - Professional Development

by Margaret Genovese, Genovese, Vanderhoof and Associates

Your growth as an arts professional is *your* responsibility. Arts organizations tend to be strapped for cash so while the sector gives a lot of lip service to professional development, Art always comes first.

1. Learn more about your arts discipline: read, experience, attend rehearsals.
2. Take evening courses in areas you have identified as your weak areas: accounting, writing, public speaking, whatever. You can handle three hours a week of "school."
3. Attend at least one performance a week by another arts organization (or see one art exhibition).
4. Buy a subscription to something; become a member of something; donate to something. Observe the process and the level of customer service you receive.
5. Join the Canadian arts service organization for your discipline *and* its American equivalent.
6. Read the *Sunday New York Times*.
7. Accept invitations: receptions, press conferences, openings. Resolve to introduce yourself to someone new—that's what name tags are for.
8. Dress for the job you aspire to.
9. Meet everyone in your own organization one on one—take people to lunch or schedule face to face time in their offices. Ask to be taught things: how to sell a ticket, how to process a donation, etc.
10. If your organization cannot afford to send you to a conference, think about sending yourself.
11. Nurture your inner child: try not to lose your sense of wonder and enchantment.