



## My Turn: Training is key to job success

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— This week's "My turn" column is by Kevin Price of Chenango-Delaware-Otsego Workforce. Of late, every time the topic of the economy and the job market arises, I feel like the weatherman forecasting 32 degrees and thunderstorms when what everyone really wants to hear is sunny, clear skies and 80 degrees. For those of us at the CDO Workforce one-stop Career Centers, the seriousness of this recession has taken on a whole new meaning in our work. While the current economic picture is less than sunny, there are bright spots. Growth and job openings within segments of the economy do exist, and as with all economic downturns, new economic opportunities and jobs are created. It is a global marketplace, which will most likely become more interdependent and further redefine the workplace. What then is my advice for all of us? How do we position ourselves for the stability we naturally crave in our lives? First, accept that the business and the job market as you know it has changed. Permanently. Second, accept that you will have multiple careers in your life. In the 1980s, it was assumed that people entering the job market would have eight careers in their lifetime. In the 1990s, this evolved into 14 careers, and now \_ well, you get the picture. In today's workplace and in the one that will emerge from this recession, your brain is your greatest asset. The knowledge, competencies, skill sets and potential intellectual property you possess are your portable assets and are worth everything. In economic terms, economists refer to our brains (collectively) as human capital. Numerically, intellectual capital is worth a lot. It is what drives the growth and emergence of economies. We as a nation would not be where we are today if it weren't for our intellectual and creative prowess. We historically have been a leader in intellectual creativity and entrepreneurial development. Some of our most noted firms, such as Microsoft, the Gap, Hewlett-Packard and Revlon, were founded during recessions and depressions. This brings me to my last words of advice. Invest in your human capital, or as Stephen Covey, author of "Seven Habits of Highly Successful People," said, "Sharpen the saw." Regardless of your level of education or years of workplace experience, in this hyper-speed and evolving business environment, survival will depend on you taking the responsibility and time to sharpen your intellect and skill sets. The reality is, regardless of your intellectual and educational level, skill sets, particularly core skill sets needed to build new knowledge, fade over time due to lack of use. Learning new skills or brushing up on old ones is essential. Obtaining a technical or college education is the smart move. Having education in or related to a field of work in demand is even better. The more you build skills prized by business, the more likely it is that you will remain in the game. The challenge going forward, for all of us, is continuously building and keeping our skills current to meet the changing workplace demands. It's like a football game. Games are won in yardage, seldom as a result of a "Hail Mary" pass. Regardless of your circumstances or educational level, I strongly urge you to do some planning. It is not just about job-hunting, it's also about thinking about what type of work you are capable of doing, what will be available in the future, and developing the skill sets needed to keep pace, one yard at a time. To stay on top, consider continuing education. There is no time like the present. CDO Workforce and its partner programs have access to a variety of funding sources to assist you. If you need assistance identifying the type of training, or a direction in which you should focus your efforts, our Career Centers can help.

Consider classes to refresh your core academic skill sets, computer and information technology skills, or proficiency in another language. If you can't attend a class, consider online training. CDO Workforce has more than 5,000 free online courses covering a wide range of industry sectors and disciplinary topics. Additionally, many educational institutions offer a range of online certificate and degree programs. Whatever it is you do, think training. Build your intellectual capital to make yourself as marketable and competitive as you can. It's a matter of survival.

If you have any questions about CDO Workforce and the range of services we offer, contact our offices. Oneonta: 432-4800, Sidney: 561-7550, Delhi: 746-7477, Norwich: 334-2201; or visit [www.cdoworkforce.org](http://www.cdoworkforce.org).

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