

Which is the Better Investment?

Valerie Fries, IRWA Chief of Education

Were you aware that, in general, people spend more of their own money improving their outer appearance than on enhancing their inner knowledge through training? Most of us feel perfectly fine about budgeting our funds for haircuts, skin care, clothing and workout equipment, but rarely on gaining new workplace skills through continuing education.

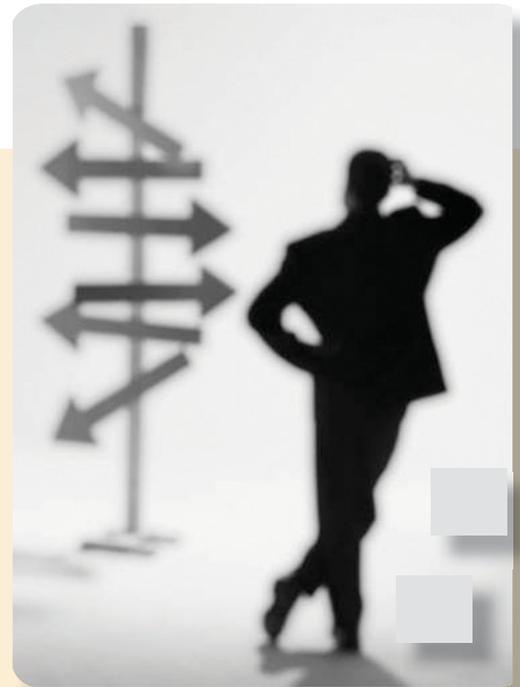
Yes, we are in the midst of a global recession, and the right of way profession has been impacted as well. Unfortunately, many private companies and agencies have been forced to drastically slash their training budgets. In today's marketplace, what's the best way to increase your value to your employer when training budgets are gone? Invest in yourself!

It is a known fact that enhancing relevant skills gives you a competitive advantage in the workplace. The more skills you acquire, the more valuable you become to your employer. And the benefits don't stop there. Employees who invest in their education are more likely to see increased salaries, greater responsibility and possibly even a promotion. In other words, skilled employees are more likely to have a successful career path.

I can hear it now, "But I can't afford to pay for my own training!" However, have you considered the higher cost of doing nothing? Training during a recession is one of the most important decisions you can make, because it increases your value as an employee. And in the event your job is eliminated due to internal budget cuts, your education will help differentiate you during a career transition. Cross-training is another way to strengthen your value to your employer. Consider asking for more responsibilities. Be prepared. Be flexible.

Here are six ways to advance your career and increase your value as an employee:

1. **ADVANCE YOUR VALUE.** Take initiative. If your employer cannot fund your professional development, then invest in yourself. If funds are tight, consider becoming a certified course coordinator and get your classes for free!
2. **ADVANCE YOUR SKILLS.** Today's employers take notice when you sharpen your skills or develop new ones that are in demand. Try a skill-building or management class through IRWA's online learning center. The



cost is only \$99 for members and you won't even have to take time off from work.

3. **ADVANCE YOUR COMPANY.** Add to the bottom line. Find ways to increase revenue and cut costs within your department or company. This may be something as simple as printing double-sided to save on paper.
4. **ADVANCE YOUR NETWORKING.** Begin with your own company and identify a mentor. Pick someone you respect and ask to meet with them. Let them know that you admire their skills and seek their advice. An easy way to start is to choose a particular skill to work on and ask them for help in that area. For example, if you want to work on presentation skills, choose someone who is a great presenter.
5. **ADVANCE YOUR PROFESSIONALISM.** Demonstrate your willingness to learn and grow by earning an IRWA designation or certification. Show that you are not only committed to your job, but to your profession as well.
6. **ADVANCE YOUR POTENTIAL.** Take action. I urge you to take control of your own training and invest in your career. Register for IRWA training today!

The investment you make in training will pay dividends over the long run. Just think, no one can take away the knowledge, skills and abilities that you'll gain.

6 WAYS to Advance:

- Take initiative
- Sharpen your skills
- Add to the bottom line
- Pick a mentor
- Earn a designation or certification
- Invest in your career