

global perspectives

What's the most useful professional development activity you've ever done?

New Zealand

Professional development doesn't need to involve going to a seminar or conference. Sometimes it's right there in your backyard, so to speak. That's been the case for me. Being a member of the IABC network and president of a new IABC chapter has been the most useful professional development experience I've had.

With a brand-new board, the president's role involves the full gamut of management competencies: recruitment and selection, development and mentoring, planning and strategizing, networking and emceeing, communication and leadership—the list goes on! Suffice it to say, it's been an experience that's given me more professional development opportunities in a short space of time than any one role in my employment history.

Lucy Sanderson-Gammon

Senior communications adviser
New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs
Wellington, New Zealand

Switzerland

When I'd been in communication practice for some time and was looking for a course that would be both relevant and help me develop personally, IABC accreditation seemed to be the answer. I was about to start my own business and had a window of just a few weeks for a course that would help me be more marketable and give me more clout with clients. A master's degree was one possibility, but the end point was too far away for my needs. I settled on IABC accreditation. In hindsight it was a great deci-

sion. I learned so much about my strengths and weaknesses as a professional communicator and what I needed to work on. I ended up with a great marketing tool for developing my business: ABC behind my name. It sets you apart and gives you a valuable talking point with clients.

Meryl David, ABC

Senior communications manager
Zurich Insurance Co.
Zurich, Switzerland

United Kingdom

The most powerful professional development activity to me is living abroad and working in different companies, industries and cultures. I grew up in Colorado but have been living abroad for more than 10 years, in Australasia, Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe.

It's one thing to travel to a foreign city for a meeting or a project for a couple of weeks or even months; it's another thing entirely to relocate permanently and make another country your home. You gain profound new personal perspectives as well as greater professional insight and flexibility.

Whether learning to listen, speak more softly, get closer, change my spelling or consider different points of view, gaining a genuinely international perspective has paid huge dividends both to my career as a communicator and to myself as a human being.

Kevin Keohane, ABC

Client partner and head
of brand and employee engagement
SAS
London

learn your abc's

Are you seeking a meaningful professional development experience? Accreditation may be just what you're looking for. Becoming an ABC means that you have successfully met a global standard in organizational communication. Test your limits and demonstrate your ability to think strategically, establish meaningful goals and objectives, and measure your success.

Find out if you are up to the challenge by taking a short accreditation-readiness quiz at www.iabc.com/abc.

what's your perspective?

Question for a future issue: What types of social media have you used for employee communication, and how? E-mail your perspective (in 125–150 words) to cwmagazine@iabc.com.