Creating a Professional Development Plan for Personal Excellence

S. MICHELE ECHOLS, ACCOMPLISHED LIBRARIAN COACH, TRAINER & FACILITATOR
“Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize.”

— CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE
What's your story?

Did you know that your *story* is your *brand*?
S. Michele Echols has quite a diverse array of experience and education, but what unifies her professional philosophy as a librarian and scholar is a commitment to seeing and serving whole individuals. “We don’t realize when we don’t show up fully or see each other fully that the person next to us often has a similar story.”

Echols is the immediate past President of the New York Black Librarians Caucus (NYBLC) served an extended term, 2015-2018, and she recently finished a three-year term as a Councilor-at-Large representing academic libraries with the New York Library Association. She holds a Master of Library Science (M.L.S.) from St. John’s University as well as a Master of Science (M.S.) in Fund-Raising and Grant-Making from New York University (NYU).

Since 2015, Echols has also taught Research and Information Literacy, Career Development and Freshman Skills courses as an adjunct professor at ASA College. In addition, Echols is currently teaching a graduate-level course in Reference & Information Services at St. John’s University her alma mater.

Ms. Echols also boasts a long list of publications and service to the profession. During her tenure as President of the NYBLC, she works to increase the number of librarians of color who serve in leadership roles by helping library support staff gain access to graduate education that would allow them to become librarians. In addition, she spearheaded NYBLC to become the first ethnic roundtable at the New York Librarians Association (NYLA) where she also serves as Councilor at Large for the New York Librarians Association (NYLA), and as Co-committee chair for the Affiliates of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA).

Echols, who received the 2017 National Institute for Literacy Scholarship Award from the Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE), traces her commitment to adult education back to her own experience as an adult learner. She received her B.A. in Humanities with a minor in Literatures from NYU after already gaining work experience and as a first-generation college student.

She resides in Harlem with her three children, instilling in them the principles of community service and its impact on one’s life. She lives by the words of late activist Helen Keller: “Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all.”
Where do Stories come from?

1. Think of all the times you created a great idea and it was celebrated by your department and/or immediate supervisor.

2. Think of time you taught somebody something new.

3. Think of a story about a time when represented your employer well.
“You have brains in your head.
   You have feet in your shoes.
   You can steer yourself any direction you choose.”

— **Dr. Seuss**, *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!*
FIVE STAGES OF REINVENTION (Re-skill and Repurpose)

CREATING YOUR OWN RULES FOR YOUR CAREER
Stage One
Reassessing your Path

Look back over your career and think about where you have traveled so far on your career journey.

Capture the learning you have accumulated so far in life.

Once you have figured out where you have traveled in your career you can look ahead to where you want to go.

Self-Assessment
# SWOT Analysis

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<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
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<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>WEAKNESSES</strong></td>
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## PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

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<tr>
<th>INTERNAL</th>
<th>Your Strengths</th>
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<tr>
<th>EXTERNAL</th>
<th>Opportunities in Your Career Field</th>
<th>Threats in Your Career Field</th>
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Know Thy Self

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- Self-actualization: desire to become the most that one can be
- Esteem: respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom
- Love and belonging: friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection
- Safety needs: personal security, employment, resources, health, property
- Physiological needs: air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction
Personality Surveys

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?
Free Personality Test

www.typefocus.com

www.humanmetrics.com

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®)
Stage Two
Gaining Career Perspective

- Look at your past, present and your future (where you want to be in your career) create a connection and make a vision for your future.
- Ask yourself what trainings or courses I can participate in to enhance my current skills.
- How long will it take to acquire the new skills?
- Seek feedback on how well you are performing in your current position.
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC’s)

https://www.themuse.com/advice/50-cheap-professional-development-classes-anyone-can-take
Stage Three
Exploratory Phase

- Explore the newly acquired skills
- Meet new people – Network
- Recognize new opportunities
- Diminish any uncertainty or confusion about taking the next steps
My Next Move

What do you want to do for a living?

"I want to be a ..."

Search careers with key words.
Describe your dream career in a few words:
Examples: doctor, build houses

"I'll know it when I see it."

Browse careers by industry.
There are over 900 career options for you to look at. Find yours in one of these industries:
Administration & Support Services

"I'm not really sure."

Tell us what you like to do.
Answer questions about the type of work you might enjoy. We'll suggest careers that match your interests and training.

https://www.mynextmove.org/
Ask Yourself the Tough Questions

Does this career track align with my values?

Is my current position interesting and challenging?

Will my current employer support me with creating my PDP?

Can I be productive in my current work environment?

Will my next career move allow for the lifestyle I want?
Stage Four
Choose the New Path

- Put the plan and new skills into action
- Write the Personal Development Plan
- Revise and update your resume
- Research current employment postings and identify the keywords (action verbs) used most frequently.
Writing the Professional Development Plan: Resources

https://www.themuse.com/advice/master-a-new-skill-your-stepbystep-plan
Writing the Professional Development Plan: Resources

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/professional-development-plan#1
Creating Your New Resume

- Review current job postings by scanning and reviewing the job descriptions and compare to your current job duties.
- Find the similarities
- Find the differences
### Action Verbs & Keywords-Dropping

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<td>Utilize</td>
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Stage Five
Taking a Step, Reflecting and Stepping Again

➢ Forward Motion – giving yourself permission to utilize the new skills and understanding yourself

➢ Begin to research prospective employers (clients)

➢ Join professional organizations outside of the library field

➢ Take control of your job search and your career
Manifestation

Journal (develop a habit of writing daily about your goals and newly acquired skills)

Write a personal statement in essay format.
Continuing the Professional Development Plan

Employment of librarians is projected to grow 6 percent from 2018 to 2028, about as fast as the average for all occupations.

Your thoughts affect your emotions. Your emotions affect your decisions. Your decisions affect your life.

"Your thoughts affect your emotions. Your emotions affect your decisions. Your decisions affect your life." by deeplifequotes is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0
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