

Goals and Direction

Professional Development and Training

Professional development can be any activity, formal or informal, that contributes to the development of your knowledge, skills or ability in any given industry.

Benefits from undertaking professional development include, but are not limited to:

- a better understanding of your role and in turn increased productivity in the workplace
- keeping up to date with new innovations and technology in your industry
- providing you with skills to deal with difficult situations and improve overall communication skills
- widening your industry network, and
- showing your manager or boss that you are motivated and serious about a career in Agriculture

Remember, professional development doesn't always have to be formal - it may be as simple as reading an industry publication or learning a new skill from a mentor or senior staff member.

It's a good idea to keep a record of any professional development to discuss at [performance appraisals](#). You can use the [template provided](#) or make your own.

Like professional development, education and training opportunities come in many different forms. These range from one-on-one training, to short courses, to Degrees, Diplomas and Certificate courses. You should be paid for all your time spent in on-farm training and meetings.

Training may be on or off farm. It can be practical, classroom style, online or a mixture of all. Your employer may be willing to subsidise training for you, so it is a good idea to discuss options with them. Remember that you are ultimately responsible for yourself – you drive your career, skill and knowledge development so think about what you want to achieve and invest in yourself.

It's also worth discussing a training plan and a career pathway with your employer so you can start planning for other training that may be required. Your employer may also be able to give you tips and feedback to help inform the plan, based on their experience in the industry.

Visit [Rural Skills Australia](#) for information about traineeships in Agriculture or see the [getting employed](#) section for links and information about training in your industry.

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Managing your finances

It may not seem important initially, but planning for the future can be beneficial for both your personal and professional life. Of course it's important that you make time to enjoy yourself along the way, but it is good to find a balance that suits you. Having a financial goal is really important – it allows you to plan ahead and see the progress you are making towards this plan. This might be saving towards something in particular (e.g. a car, place to live) or putting some money aside for your future goals.

For example, Ben is a full time Farm Assistant in his first year of work. His annual pay, which includes some overtime and public holiday hours, works out to be roughly \$41,000 per annum.

Ben wants to save but also wants to have some cash to spend on a weekly basis. Ben has worked out a weekly budget to help him see how much 'spare' cash he has after expenses and savings.

Wages (Per Year)	\$41,000
Tax	\$3,895
After tax (per week)	\$713.56
Expenses	
Debt servicing (car)	-\$100
Running costs (car)	-\$100
Board & lodgings*	-\$100
Mobile phone	-\$20
Spare cash	\$393.56
Less savings	-\$150
Cash available for spending	\$243.56

*These expenses can vary depending on type of position and may or may not include food, power and phone.

You will be surprised at how quickly you can grow your savings with compound interest and regular weekly payments. For example, if you save \$150 a week for 5 years, you could end up with around \$40,000 in the bank (based on an interest rate of 2%). You can even try setting up automatic payment so that each month (or week) a portion of your pay goes directly into a savings account.

Use the ASIC compound interest calculator to see how much you can save with regular payments. ASIC also has an easy to use [budget planner](#) so you can see where you are spending your money.

There are also a number of sites with really good resources to help manage your finances, one of the more popular ones is [www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au](#)

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Building a reputation

How do you build a good personal reputation?

- be professional in all that you do and follow through on tasks you've committed to
- have good time management skills, good communication skills, and be responsible
- be good at your job and work at developing your skills and knowledge
- treat other people as you would like to be treated yourself
- when you are working with and talking to people, show your enthusiasm and motivation, as this can be as important as your skill level
- be careful how you portray yourself in social media, texting and emails. Remember, these are all public, and if you don't want your employer (current and future) to see it, think twice about putting it up. It could come back to haunt you
- look after tools, common work areas, machinery, etc.

REMEMBER

Beware of social media (Facebook, Snapchat, email, Twitter, YouTube)

Did you know making comments on social media about your employer and your workplace - even if you don't name names - can be against the terms of your employment contract? Take extra care. Most importantly, do not use these pages to make a workplace complaint. Ask your employer for a copy of their social media policy so you can understand what is reasonable and / or expected behaviour.

You should not say or do anything on social media that:

- has the potential to bring your employer's business into disrepute;
- gives away or discusses confidential information;
- could be viewed as derogatory towards or disparaging of workmates, customers or clients;
- undermines your effectiveness or productivity at work (eg, through excessive use)

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Goal setting

It is important to know where you are going and what you are trying to achieve. It's a good idea to have written goals and time targets to achieve them. When you are starting out, it is often hard to know what might be possible. Write your goals down, regularly review them, and ask yourself these two questions:

- are these the goals I still want to achieve?
- is my current job taking me in the right direction to achieve my goals?

If the answer to either of these questions is "no", then you need to think about your current employment situation and if you need to redefine your goals. It is OK to rethink where you are and where you want to be heading. Not all successful people knew exactly what they wanted to achieve when they were starting out – the key to success is having and reviewing goals that enable you to make decisions in your career. Not everything in life always goes to plan but having written goals will help you navigate challenges and changes as they arise.

Having goals will help you identify if a new job will give you the skills and experience you are looking for, or if it is a step in the wrong direction for you. Having financial goals and budgeting can be the difference between getting ahead and going backwards.

Stepping Stones

For more information on Career planning refer to Dairy Australia's Stepping Stones program:

Stepping Stones provides information on the different types of careers on a dairy farm and explores the different pathways available for people who are either looking to start a career on a dairy farm, or for experienced people who want to progress their dairy career further:

Visit <http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/planning-for-the-future/stepping-stones.htm> for more information.

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Also relevant

[Employees](#)