So how do we keep up and stay one step ahead of being overtaken by robot librarians? According to the McKinsey Global Institute, “by 2030, as many as 375 million workers globally will have to master fresh skills as their current jobs evolve alongside the rise of automation and capable machines.” So to keep up and stay relevant, we must we must shift to the notion that continuous professional development, or lifelong learning, is a requirement for success. We must foster an environment where we provide our employees with the opportunity to take ownership of their professional development and provide on-the-job training and mentorship so that learning and development become core for all future positions.

In “Fostering a Culture of Teamwork Around Continuous Professional Development,” Teresa Miguel-Stearns provides an excellent framework for developing a team approach to continuous learning. She says “no one person alone can stay current on all developments in every practice area or in every service department. Thus, the team approach to professional development best serves our patrons.” At my firm, we also have taken a team approach to learning by having the embedded research analysts in specific practice areas provide one-hour “Reference Academies.”

As the Baby Boomer generation retires, we must also think about developing our future leaders with new skills, including leadership influence and design thinking. Fittingly, this issue includes Michael Robak’s recap of the inaugural AALL Executive Leadership Institute held last July. The ability to influence—to have an impact on the behaviors, attitudes, opinions, and choices of others—is an essential leadership skill. It is becoming increasingly important to enable information professionals to develop skills that help drive the strategic and business goals of our organizations. As we learn to live in a working environment that continuously changes, the new generation of leaders will need to sell ideas to motivate their staff to support and implement new technologies and new ways of partnering and serving our patrons.

As we begin a new decade, do you have a plan for your career and professional development? Have your reassessed your current position, set priorities for future growth, and explored the opportunities you want to pursue? If not, carefully read the article “A Smarter Way to Make Early and Mid-Career Decisions,” which provides a road map for career satisfaction by stressing the importance of goal setting and networking. The future is yours, seize it!