

Professional Career Development

BMSW4005

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Introduction

“Organisations are made up of their individual members, whether acting in isolation or as part of a group, in response to expectations of the organisation, or as a result of the influences of the external environment.” (Mullins, 2016, p.117) During the studies of personal and professional development planning, we have come across the knowledge of organisations, their structure and the importance of individuals within an organisation. For us to be best prepared for entering into a career or choosing a career path, there needs to be an increased understanding of the ways in which businesses operate. During this module, there has been a significant focus upon the personal behaviour of employees within a workplace, such as the ways to behave in an interview and how to create a healthy work-life balance. In this reflective essay, I will demonstrate the knowledge which I have constructed during this module, alongside a SWOT analysis of my personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats for my future transition into a professional setting. It will further analyse which areas I have improved in, and which areas I require further improvement, in order to become a better professional version of myself. Through the essay, there will be quotations of research made during the module, which will be in support of my thesis and understanding of professional career development.

Analysis

Professional Career Development outside of university consists of having an understanding and knowledge of how to be able to go down a chosen career path. In order to have such an ability, an individual needs to have a few things such as knowledge how to make a CV, a cover letter, how to behave at an interview and others. “Organisations in one form or another have always been an integral feature of human civilisation.” (Mullins, 2016, p.70) That is why people tend to be organisation-oriented when planning for a future career. Large organisations and businesses are known to provide individuals with benefits aside from the salary or wage on a monthly or yearly basis. This can include incentives such as bonuses, phone or car and other forms of financial motivation. During the course, I have gained understanding that for me to be able to achieve a certain level of expertise in any area or profession, I need to acquire numerous skills, which will make me better than the so-called competition. Once I have graduated and received a certificate of education, I will be one amongst many individuals applying for the same jobs and I need to have a unique selling point, as products do in business. This will make me diverse and I will have a higher chance of receiving an interview or a placement.

However, for me to be able to get to this step, there is a necessity of a curriculum vitae or CV which is professional and neat. A CV is described as “a short written description of your education, qualifications, previous jobs, and sometimes also your personal interests, which you send to an employer when you are trying to get a job.” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020) If the CV makes an impact on the person who is reviewing job applications within the Human Resource department of a company, one might be called to an interview. However, many times CV’s look identical and there is nobody that stands out from the crowd. I learned that for me to have a chance at getting a job I would like; I must stand out from the crowd. This can be done by acquiring several skills, which will make me a better choice for chosen companies and professions. “Hans Eysenck believed that personality was largely inherited and that we are born with differing physiological tendencies.” (Mullins, 2016, p.122) Therefore, many organisations take on a similar approach towards all individuals who are working or will work within the company.

“Independence, conscientiousness, agreeableness and self-control are examples of personality characteristics.” (Mullins, 2016, p.118) Most businesses require workers who have already been trained in a certain set of skills, as in this way they won’t have to invest time and money in the training of newly hired individuals. “Sophisticated selection processes form part of a strategic bundle of HR practices which contribute to improved organisational performance.” (Torrington, 2014, p.133) In this case, most Human Resource departments have a certain set of ways, by which they attract and hire the employees, which will satisfy the needs of the company.

Therefore, it has come to my attention that I have strengths which would be beneficial to me in the future, once I start applying to jobs. However, there are also existing weaknesses within my professional behaviour, which may require further improvements in order to increase the opportunities and lower the threats of job-dissatisfaction. For me to gain a better understanding of the mentioned strengths and weaknesses, I have prepared a personal SWOT analysis, which gives a closer look at current and future opportunities and threats. This analysis has been created after a series of role-plays have been conducted during the module. One such role-play was between an interviewer and an interviewee for a desired role at The Chilworth Hotel in Paddington, London. Prior to the interview, I had created a Curriculum Vitae to send on to the Human Resource team at the hotel, where I wished to apply for the position of a Spa Manager. Here is the role-play in detail, where I will explain the reasoning between the chosen questions and answers:

Interview Role Play

Q: Every manager has their specific style considering the organisation type. What would you say your managerial style is as a spa manager?

(This question was chosen as in every organisation and especially, specialized ones such as a spa, a certain managerial style is expected. Therefore, an interviewer would like to understand how the applicant thinks with regards to managing employees. It could have been done better, as this shouldn’t have been the opening question of the interview.)

A: A spa is the place people go to relax and get rid of everyday worries. Therefore, I, as manager must be aware that there is always a chance for failure and disharmony. However, I try to deal with responsibilities, as well as issues in a calm and collective manner. A spa should not be a place where clients are stressed, people in the team should fit in the atmosphere.

(The applicant explains their strategies and tactics, speaking in an objective way, by trying to understand the needs of the guests within the spa establishment.)

Q: What experience do you have regarding this job opportunity?

(In each job interviews require knowledge of the applicant's experience; however, the question could have been formulated better.)

A: In the past I was always aware that I wanted to provide people with joy and calm. Eventually it was that I went to a spa, where I realised I would love to have such an establishment. On my journey of learning I graduated Business Management, as well as Reflexology and Holistic Therapy. I have over a year experience as a Spa Manager, however I had to relocate due to personal reasons.

(The answer of the interviewee is individualistic and could be more professional, as the interviewer is interested in the professional experience in the question, he/she asks.)

Q: So, what do you do off-the-job, considering personal enrichment and development?

(The question aims to gain better understanding of the applicant's individuality, however it could have been formulated in a more professional type of way, as it isn't written in a professional manner.)

A: My focus is largely on my kid and our local community and volunteering takes a part of our life. We attend the theatre regularly, as well as exhibitions and books are an everyday purchase for me. I like to believe that knowledge gives you the most power in life. It's enriching and fulfilling for me and my family to learn as much as possible.

(The applicant should share all relevant information about their lives, which makes them a better fit for the job position. This answer shares specific and positive information about applicant)

Q: In the workplace, what do you find the most important traits in employees and leaders?

(This question aims to discuss the traits the applicant already has, as in an interview, individuals tend to discuss their own understanding of leadership and workplace relationships.)

A: I am a believer of teamwork and that creativity should flow. That of course doesn't mean chaos but allowing minds to work for the best outcome in situations. I mean, two heads are better than one, even if one person makes the decision. Also, punctuality is incredibly important, as it leads to discipline. If you can't come on time, you can't achieve most things. And it's not about the casual lateness because of traffic, it's the lack of respect to your job and your workplace. Lastly, I support working in a calm and collected manner - anger isn't productive.

(The answer of the applicant is honest and personalised and showcases many individual traits such as punctuality, teamwork, calm demeanor, creativity and respect. This would give the interviewer an idea of the belief system the applicant has previously built for themselves.)

Q: Sounds great so far, how have you found your experience with us today? Do you feel like it could be your next workplace?

(The interviewer should be kind and understand how the applicant is feeling within the work environment which they are applying to work for. In the case of this question, it could have been friendly and more professional, instead of simply friendly.)

A: Ah, it's been a blast, thank you for asking! So many positive and happy people it brings me joy! I absolutely believe that I could fit right in this happy environment! Plus, after all, precision comes with practice!

(The applicant is portraying a positive attitude, however within a hotel, there is a requirement of more professionalism, especially when the hotel has 5 rating. The applicant could receive the job, due to previous experience, however they would require additional training.)*

After looking back at the role play interview, I gain knowledge of the weak points of the scenario which I have created. This allows be to better create my personal SWOT analysis as following.

Strengths What do you do well? What unique resources can you draw on? What do others see as your strengths?	Weaknesses What could you improve? Where do you have fewer resources than others? What are others likely to see as weaknesses?
Calming down under pressure. Understanding the individual needs of customers and people. I speak several languages, which allows me to converse freely with a variety of individuals. Microsoft Office. Social Media Marketing. Conflict Resolution.	Detailed Technical Knowledge. Professional Speaking and Writing. Leadership. Time Management. Lack of Vast Professional Experience.
Opportunities What opportunities are open to you? What trends could you take advantage of? How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?	Threats What threats could harm you? What is your competition doing? What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?
Creation of Networking in Several Countries. Ability to apply for numerous jobs, due to MS knowledge and social media marketing. Ability to resolve conflicts and not crack under pressure. Able to work in a team, without creating issues with colleagues. Understanding people can create loyal customers in future.	The transformation of business world will require vast technical knowledge and understanding. Inability to speak and write professionally can make me miss out on high-end customers and opportunities. Being late can affect my job performance, leading to a loss of job position Lacking leadership skills can make me lose out on better work opportunities.

	Less work experience will make me undesirable by companies and prospective employers.
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Personal SWOT Analysis**Conclusion**

To conclude, “our unique different characteristics and attributes shape our values and what we give and expect to receive from working.” (Mullins, 2016, p.116) For an individual to be prepared for a professional career, one needs to be able to meet the requirements and specifications of different businesses. During the module, I have understood my strengths and weaknesses and I have learned what it is that I need to improve and focus on, so that I am ready for the professional world, once I graduate.

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