

Professional Career Development

BMSW4005

Alexandra-Lavinia Ilie:2022000

Lecture: Anita Nan

Contents

Introduction	3
Lifeline experience	3
Reflection on my role play	3
Self Motivation.....	6
Learning Styles.....	6
SWOT Analysis.....	7
Johari Window.....	8
SMART Objectives	9
What employers want.....	10
Professional Development Plan	11
Conclusion.....	12
References	13
Appendices.....	15
Appendix 1: Application form.....	15
Appendix 2: Interview questions	18

List of figures:

Figure 1:Gibbs reflection cycle	4
Figure 2:VAK Learning Styles	6
Figure 3:SWOT Analysis	7
Figure 4:Johari Window	9
Figure 5:SMART Objectives Criteria	10

List of Tables:

Table 1: Personal SWOT analysis	8
Table 2: SMART Objectives	10
Table 3: Personal Development Plan	12

Introduction

In order to pursue a career, one must engage in a variety of activities known as professional career development. This report aims to present a structured analysis of my professional development and review the objectives I have set in my career and the steps I have designed for my professional development plan. In order to conduct objective and relevant analyses, I used some recognised tools such as SWOT Analysis and Johari Window, and I set my career goals by setting SMART Objectives. I will also present in this report how the work impacted me on the role play and how experiential learning was installed as a result of the implementation of the job interview situation, referring to Gibb's theory.

Lifeline experience

There are some past events which have influenced my career so far and also my career plans. One of them would be when I worked as a sales representative at SC ICO LIANORA'S PEN, where I first realised how important it is for me to be surrounded by people, to socialise because no matter how my life went, when I was at work I was enjoying the time and I felt disconnected from the day to day problems of my personal life. From that moment, I promised myself that I would always look for jobs that can ensure people interaction.

I can communicate with my colleagues and consumers, and I have created a good relationship with my colleagues. On my birthday I brought cake and gifts which surprised me a lot and made me happy. Besides that, another event which made me happy was a salary increment because of my performance. As I am good at communicating with people, I could communicate with consumers effectively. As a result, I could demonstrate to consumers product details and build up a good relationship with consumers, which helped me increase sales for the company (Arnett and Wittmann, 2014). However, despite having good experiences, I also had terrible experiences working there. I could not accomplish a task given to me by my upper-level management because of the management's lack of proper directing ability.

Reflection on my role play

Reflection is a process that allows students to pause, reevaluate, and synthesise their learning experiences (Adeani et al., 2020). Gibbs's reflection model is one of the popular reflection models. Gibbs's reflection model is divided into six stages, and Reflection on my roleplay is done through Gibbs's reflection model.

Gibbs Reflective Cycle

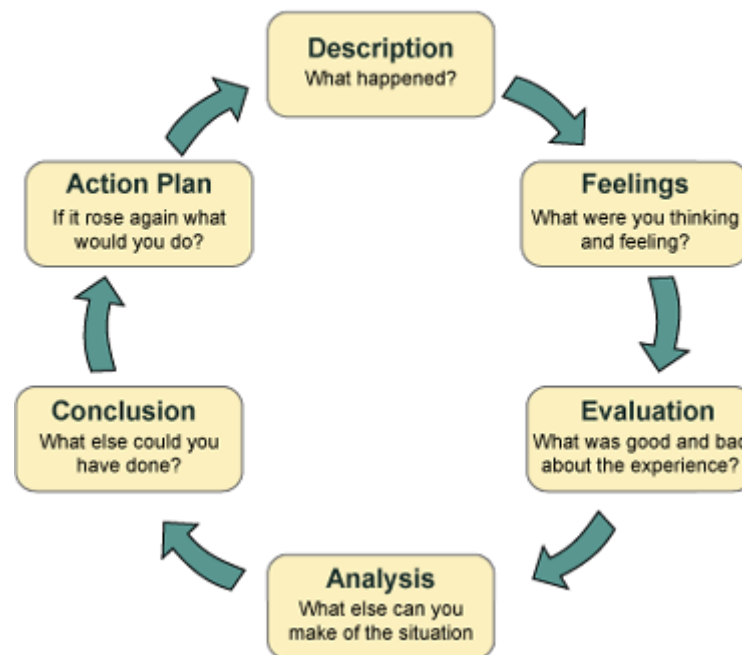


Figure 1: Gibbs reflection cycle

Source: (Adeani et al., 2020)

Description: My role is as a sales and marketing executive. I have to communicate with people or consumers and supply them with information about the company's various products. My information delivering ability can ensure sales.

Feeling: I was nervous and excited about my performance in the role play. I was nervous because I was afraid if I could not do my job correctly or if I could not communicate with consumers properly. I developed myself with enhanced communication skills, which helped me properly do the role.

Evaluation: I was good at communication. As a result, it helped me to increase sales. So, my skills for the job role were good enough, which was efficient and effective to meet the job requirements.

Analysis: Despite good communication skills, I was sometimes nervous while providing sales statistics to the management. Because of that, I could not effectively conduct my presentation.

Conclusion: I have to improve my communication skill. Through this, I can communicate with anyone, which can help me to improve my work efficiency in the sales and marketing role.

Action plan: By analysis, I can understand that I still lack my communication skills and self-confidence. I have increased my self-confidence through meditation. Besides that, I have

to communicate with more people and read books about communication enhancing tricks or methods.

Self Motivation

I consider that I have a satisfactory level of self-motivation, but I can make room for improvement. My teacher at high school inspired me for this profession. He is a highly skilled professor and a master at sales and marketing. Therefore, I learnt various aspects of sales and marketing, including career growth opportunities which inspired me to choose that profession. Besides him, a relative of mine works at Unilever as a sales and marketing executive who earns a good salary. So, from his career experience, my inspiration to choose the sales and marketing profession was also boosted. Another factor is that sales and marketing job offers a good amount of salary to the employees (Götz et al., 2017)

What has determined me so far to take the steps I have taken in my career and what pushes me further in the same direction is represented by how good it feels when you put all your efforts into helping a customer according to their needs and succeed. Another way I manage to keep my motivation high is by pushing myself outside my comfort zone by getting specialised in something, even if the information source is YouTube, or trying something new. As an example, now I intend to become a Sales Representative at an Apple Store. The field in which the store operates is of interest to me, as I am passionate about everything that involves technology, devices and the latest gadgets.

Learning Styles

VAK learning styles allow us to discover and optimise our learning styles (Surjono, 2018). Thus, we can learn how to learn faster and how the information should be presented to us to remain in the memory. According to the VAK model, most people use a mix of three learning styles: visual learning, auditory learning and kinesthetic learning.

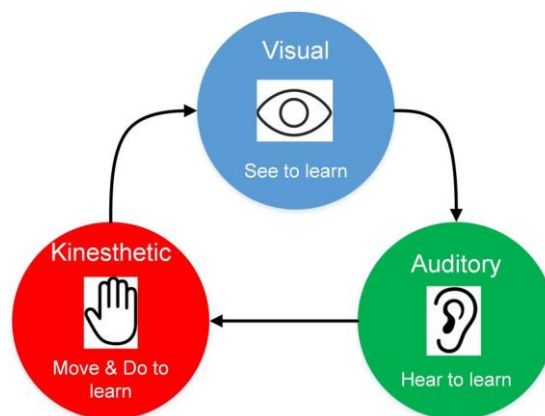


Figure 2:VAK Learning Styles

Source: (Surjono, 2018)

Visual: In this learning style, Learners learn by visual materials such as graphs and charts. Learners who prefer a visual learning style can retain pieces of information effectively presented as visual.

Auditory: Learning by hearing is an auditory learning style. In this learning style, learners can learn by hearing the instructor's instruction and hearing their voice (Gholami and Bagheri, 2013). With this learning style, learners can learn faster and retain instructions effectively given by the instructor.

Kinesthetic: Learners can learn by physically active movements such as hand gestures. Through this, an instructor can instruct learners by which learners can learn better.

Among those learning styles, I follow the Auditory and Kinesthetic learning types. That is because I prefer to learn by listening to the teacher's voice, in group discussion, playing or even hear my voice repeating something after the trainer or tutor as much as I also prefer sometimes to learn through tactile sense, experimenting, carrying out projects or experiments. I can learn faster by hearing the instruction given by the instructor as I can memorise better by hearing. Besides that, the Kinesthetic learning style also influences and boosts my learning process.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis is a vital tool in drawing guidelines for self-awareness regarding my employment potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (GURL, 2017).



Figure 3:SWOT Analysis

Source: (GURL, 2017)

Below my SWOT analysis is presented:

Strengths	Weakness
-----------	----------

▪ long experience in sales ▪ excellent communication skills ▪ the strong inner desire to help ▪ strong work ethic ▪ I feel at ease among people ▪ talkative	▪ lack of goal focus ▪ non-compliance with the deadlines imposed by me on my career ▪ the tendency to try to learn everything but to do it on a mediocre level
Opportunities ▪ personal development ▪ meeting many people ▪ getting acquainted with the tech field ▪ evolution within the company ▪ specialised training offered by the employer for professional progress in another position ▪ international opportunities due to its reputation	Threats ▪ lots of competitors in my area ▪ competitors who also have studied in the tech field may be preferred ▪ blocking the recruitment of new staff due to the pandemic

Table 1: Personal SWOT analysis

Source: (Self-Made)

Conducting a complete SWOT Analysis, it is easier to see what aspects are in the areas that need our maximum attention: the Weaknesses side, to work on them, or the Threats side, which we should try to remove or eclipse by emphasising the Strengths and Opportunities.

Johari Window

The Johari Window model is another helpful tool that helps us illustrate and improve self-awareness (Luft and Ingham, 2017). A learner's perception can be enhanced because of this model. Telling information to others and learning from their feedback is the central concept of that model. Therefore, the model is divided into four windows, and each of that four windows represents four types of information about a person. To improve my self-awareness of my abilities Johari window model is conducted below:

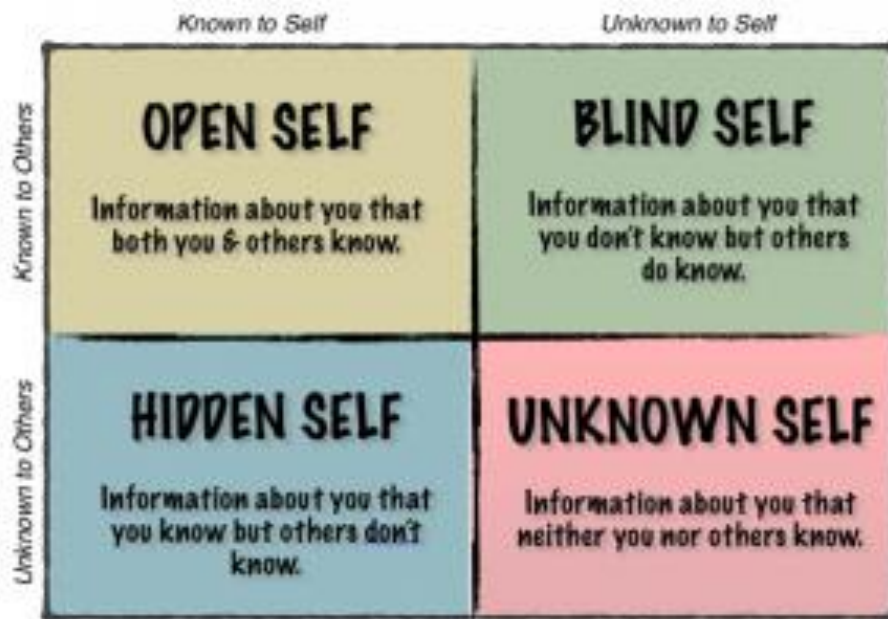


Figure 4:Johari Window

Source: (Luft and Ingham, 2017)

My personal Johari window is structured as follows:

1. **Open self:** The skills and characteristics of mine that are known by others, including me, are: friendly, energetic, independent, kind, patient, organised, warm, helpful, trustworthy, confident, extroverted, spontaneous, adaptable, caring, cheerful, able
2. **Blind self:** The skills and characteristics of mine that are known by others but not me are: logical, clever, happy, knowledgeable, intelligent, accepting, loving
3. **Hidden self:** The skills and characteristics of mine that are not known by others but known to me are: calm, giving, modest, mature, nervous, empathetic, self-conscious
4. **Unknown self:** The skills and characteristics of mine that are not known by others, including me, are: wise, idealistic, reflective, bold, brave, witty, complex, introverted, observant, proud, tense, shy, quiet

Using this technique to examine me as others perceive me can learn to influence how my behaviour will be interpreted from the outside (Luft and Ingham, 2017). I will not be a victim of communication by expressing myself well, and misunderstandings will decrease. Managing myself and my communication style is seen as a vital leadership skill as it means managing others and my life. Besides, I should reveal my hidden self characteristics, such as nervousness. Through this, I can take feedback from others to improve myself.

SMART Objectives

Formulating SMART Objectives will allow me to create, track and hopefully accomplish my short and long term career goals. SMART stands for the criteria that the objectives must

meet to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (Bjerke and Renger, 2017). They must respect these criteria if we want to make sure that the objectives are firm and possible.



Figure 5: SMART Objectives Criteria

Source: (Bjerke and Renger, 2017).

My SMART career objectives are as follows:

Table 2: SMART Objectives

Source: (Self-Made)

Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-Bound
Working as a sales representative at Apple	Applying for a job at Apple Store	Obtaining the job	It would be a start for development within the company	In the next up to 3 months
Specialising in the technological field	Taking technology courses	Obtaining the certificate	It will stimulate career progression	During my time as a sales representative
Working as a junior technical specialist	Applying for a job as a junior technical specialist	Obtaining the job	It will achieve my long term goal	The next five years

What employers want

Most of the recruitment announcements on Apple's official website state that the company needs passionate people. They are looking for those who get great satisfaction by

helping people and are focused on delivering an excellent customer experience. Working for Apple is about introducing people to the world of Apple, having lots of interactions, offering adapted solutions and transforming curious visitors into loyal customers (Carnevale et al., 2019). Employers do require a deep understanding of Apple products and services, besides a few essential qualifications, such as minimal proficiency in technology, the ability and desire to quickly learn about new products, proven experience in sales, and developing customer loyalty. They also mention some additional requirements, such as educating others about all that Apple offers, setting the standard for Apple's unique style of service through words and action, to demonstrate strong people skills (approachable, good listener, and empathetic). So, quick learning ability and good communication skills are required to satisfy the company's requirements. With quick learning skills, I can educate myself with various details about technology and pieces of information about the product. With good communication skills, I can communicate with consumers efficiently and can educate others about various information. Through this, I can help the company increase sales, and colleagues will also benefit from my skills.

Professional Development Plan

By writing my professional Development Plan, I will try to be more specific about how I think I will achieve the employer needs I presented above. Of course, I will have to keep the SMART objectives I set in mind because they are a good starting point (Rubens et al., 2018).

Skills which I need to develop	Ways of developing the skills	What will be the impact	Period
Quick learning skill	- At first, I have to understand my learning style, and By the VAK model, I can understand that auditory and kinesthetic learning style is perfect for me. So, while learning new skills, I will try to follow those methods.	- By learning this skill, I can learn faster about the technical information that the employer wants. - I can learn quickly and faster the	Two months

	- Focusing on a clear learning goal can enhance my quick learning ability. - Creating or taking notes can also help me in that process. - Various books about quick learning enhancing tricks are available, and those need to be read by me.	learning requirements of the employer, which can help me improve my work efficiency.	
Communicating skill	- I have to increase my patience to focus on what others tell me. By focusing, I can understand what others are saying, which can help me provide feedback, increasing my communication skill. - I have to communicate with others more to communicate with anyone easily. - Various journals and books about communication skills can help me increase that skill.	- With this skill, I can communicate better with the employer and the consumers. As I can communicate with consumers effectively, it can help the company to increase sales.	Three months

Table 3: Personal Development Plan

Source: (Self-Made)

Conclusion

Gathering so much information about myself, my ambitions, and the world of work in this paper gave me a realistic and well-thought-out goal to aim for. It helped me understand how to define my career path and stay motivated and focused on tracking my career progression. In addition, this report will represent a valuable tool for me in my career in the coming months and as a model for the more distant future.

References

Arnett, D.B. and Wittmann, C.M., 2014. Improving marketing success: The role of tacit knowledge exchange between sales and marketing. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(3), 324-331.

Götz, O., Hoelter, A.K. and Krafft, M., 2017. The role of sales and marketing in market-oriented companies. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 33(4), pp.353-371.

Surjono, H.D., 2018. The design of an adaptive e-learning system based on students' learning styles. *International Journal of Computer Science and Information Technologies*, 2(5), 2350-2353.

Gholami, S. and Bagheri, M.S., 2013. Relationship between VAK learning styles and problem-solving styles regarding gender and students' fields of study. *Journal of language teaching and research*, 4(4), p.700.

GURL, E., 2017. SWOT analysis: A theoretical review.

Luft, J. and Ingham, H., 2017. The Johari Window: a graphic model of awareness in interpersonal relations. *Human relations training news*, 5(9), pp.6-7.

Bjerke, M.B. and Renger, R., 2017. Being smart about writing SMART objectives. *Evaluation and program planning*, 61, pp.125-127.

Carnevale, A.P., Gainer, L.J. and Meltzer, A.S., 2019. Workplace basics: The skills employers want—US Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration.

Rubens, A., Schoenfeld, G.A., Schaffer, B.S. and Leah, J.S., 2018. Self-awareness and leadership: Developing an individual strategic professional development plan in an MBA leadership course. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 16(1), 1-13.

Adeani, I.S., Febriani, R.B. and Syafryadin, S., 2020. USING GIBBS'REFLECTIVE CYCLE IN MAKING REFLECTIONS OF LITERARY ANALYSIS. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 6(2), pp.139-148.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Application form

Job application form

Application for Apple Store Sales Advisor

Your details

Name: Alexandra - Lavinia Ilie

Education and training

Please give details:

-Theoretical high school "Tudor Arghezi"- Craiova, Romania, graduate in July 2006.

-University of Wales Trinity Saint David - CERTHE Skills for the Work Place, still studying at the moment.

Qualifications

Please give details:

-I attended an online Sales course for companies at Sales Academy in June 2018, due to which I developed excellent interpersonal skills and customer-oriented solid skills.

-Sales Representative with 5+ years of experience.

Employment history

Your current or most recent employer

Name of employer: SC ICO LIANORA'S PEN

Job title: Sales representative

Length of time with employer: November 2018-March 2020

Reason for leaving: Bankruptcy of the company

Duties:

- Serving customers by selling the company's products
- Meeting customer need by paying attention to the requirements
- Planning and organising daily work schedule
- Submits orders by referring to price, lists and product literature
- Keeping management informed by providing activity and results reports,
- Submitting daily call reports, weekly work plans and monthly and annual territory analyses

Previous employers

Please tell us about other jobs you have done and the skills you used or learned in those jobs.

- I also worked at SC CHEMCOMEX SRL, where I held the sales consultant position.
- The tasks I have undertaken daily have developed several skills for me, especially those related to customer relations. My communication skills have improved with interaction with those who stepped on our doorstep.
- Moreover, I have managed to lay the foundations of a work ethic that I am proud of.
- The most used skills have been the organisational ones and working under pressure and on my initiative, which helped me become a reliable employee, independent of the employer's guidelines on every move.

Supporting statement

Please tell us why you applied for this job and why you think you are the best person for the job.

- I applied to this job out of my desire to continue to do in my career what brings me the most excellent satisfaction: to represent an effective channel of help for clients, to interact with people of all categories and types and to try to invest my knowledge in to propose the most suitable variants for their needs.
- I must add that the field in which the store operates is of interest to me, as I am passionate about everything that involves technology, devices and the latest gadgets and I consider that this would be a plus for the company, to have an employee who also has a passion for the products they sell.
- I consider myself suitable for this position because I have a vast experience in the field of sales. Over the years, I have been active in this position, encountering various situations from which I have learned and developed strong interpersonal skills and genuine entrepreneurial drive and spirit.

Right to work in the UK

Do you need a work permit to work in the UK? Yes / **No**

References

Please give the names and contact details of 2 people whom we can ask to give you a reference. We may ask them before an employment offer is made. We will not ask your current employer until we get your permission.

SC ICO LIANORA'S PEN – Popescu Cornelia – popescu.cornelia@gmail.com

SC CHEMCOMEX SRL – Ionescu Irina - +40758775017

Declaration

I confirm that the information I have provided on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge, and I accept that providing deliberately false information could result in my dismissal.

Name: Alexandra-Lavinia Ilie

Signature: A.-L. I.

Date: November 20th, 2021

Appendix 2: Interview questions

1. Tell me something about yourself, please.
2. I saw in your application form that you have excellent communication skills. Can you give details or present me with a situation in which you demonstrated this?
3. How would you deal with an unhappy customer?
4. What are some of your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
5. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?