

Alice Freeman - PV & VP

by Alice Freeman

Submission date: 31-Mar-2025 04:58PM (UTC+0100)

Submission ID: 254341811

File name: 52402_Alice_Freeman_Alice_Freeman_-_PV__VP_645588_1231389102.docx (41.8K)

Word count: 1701

Character count: 10366

1. Understand the purpose and value of the people profession

Q: With reference to the CIPD Profession Map, appraise what it means to be a people professional. (AC 1.1)

People professionals support organisations and employees in building effective, ethical and positive workplaces. To achieve this, they need to be responsible and act with integrity, be objective and fair, and be accountable for their actions; always striving to role-model good behaviours. The work of a people professional is essential in driving performance by considering employee well-being and ensuring fair and inclusive practices. For this to be achieved, a people professional should be culturally sensitive and have a respect for diversity; be approachable, emotionally intelligent and be able to act respectfully, with diplomacy and discretion.

The CIPD Profession Map, alongside the CIPD code of Conduct and Ethics, provides a framework and identifies core behaviours, knowledge and values required of people professionals to meet the personal and professional values listed above.

The CIPD (2025) describes 'The Profession Map' as the international standard for the people profession which can be used effectively by Human Resource (HR) professionals, specialists within the field, for organisational development (OD) and can also be used and applied by individuals and teams without CIPD membership as a benchmarking tool. People professionals can use this as tool to exercise their skill in strategic workforce planning and social capital to recognise and develop talent and to work closely and effectively with leaders across teams by continually measuring performance.

The Profession Map is broken down into key competencies, required within the people profession, and describes those competencies at 4 different levels: Foundation, Associate, Chartered Member, and Chartered Fellow. It is imperative for people professionals to continually develop their own knowledge and skills to help them stay relevant; By establishing where we currently sit on the map, we can identify continual professional development (CPD) milestones required to reach each consecutive level.

HR standards compliment the Profession Map as good practice guidance which influence policies and demonstrate an organisation's commitment to quality and compliance. People management processes specifically challenge leaders to foster a good working culture and support evidence-based decision-making through metrics (CIPD, 2025a).

By applying the competencies set out in the Profession Map, at any level, people professionals add value to organisations by contributing to: Enhanced employee engagement and productivity, supporting leadership to make ethical, strategic and values-driven workforce decisions, ensuring compliance with employment laws and ethical HR practices.

As people professionals we need to be committed to change and continuous improvement.

"HR also needs actively to build a culture that embraces change and expects it."

(Taylor and Woodhams, 2022, pg. 34). 409

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2. Know own personal and ethical values and apply these consistently in their (people practice) work.

Q: Discuss your personal and ethical values (one of each), with examples of how these are evident in your work. (If you have yet to work in people practice, explore how you believe your values would inform your work.) (AC 1.2)

Ethical values are pertaining to morals or individual's moral compass, knowing the difference between right and wrong, and guiding their actions and behaviours accordingly. One is typically drawn toward ethics that are set by their community, upbringing, and culture.

As an **INFP (Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving)** personality type, my values are deeply rooted in integrity, compassion, and a strong sense of purpose.

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Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

Fairness ensures that individuals are treated equitably, with impartiality and justice.

In people practice, these values foster an environment where people feel psychologically safe, valued, and empowered to express themselves openly.

Whilst working in a Health and Social Care setting, there is always an increased ethical responsibility to act with fairness and integrity, within the public's trust and to comply with various codes of conduct and legislation.

Some personal examples include:

- Reporting safeguarding concerns, regarding close friends.
- Under the Mental Capacity Act you are supporting an individual in making a decision in their best interest rather than letting your own judgements and decisions have an impact, you focus on what you know of the individual and their representatives to assist in making the decision. When putting risk management plans in place with regards to that decision, you are thinking about the least restrictive course of action for the individual rather than for the wishes of oneself or others.

As people practitioners, how can we help others to act ethically?

The CIPD recommends actions we can promote to encourage others to act in accordance with ethical behaviours and values in their employer's guide to ethics at work. They suggest that whilst a code of conduct and a supporting disciplinary procedure is good, this alone can be only 'compliance focussed'. However, by choosing to embed a code of ethics in addition, setting out values or principles, can assist in making ethical decisions. A code of ethics must be consistently reinforced and used by everyone in the organisation to remain relevant.

Barriers can include:

- Cultural norms and behaviours may pose a risk to disengagement with the code of ethics so contextual training and consistent, clear communication is required.
- Ultimately difficult to measure with metrics so making measurement metrics clear is important.

The CIPD also observe that job role design is also integral to an ethical workplace. If a role is not rewarding and repetitive it could lead to complacency. Too high a pressure in a role could lead to cutting corners.

Safe systems raising concerns need to be well established and well known, like 'whistleblowing' policies or 'speak-up' services, ensuring the safeguarding of whistleblowers.

Organisations need to maintain their duty of candour and be accountable when things go wrong (CIPD 2024a).

Listening to Michael Schur in a Ted Talk, he poses the question: "How would you prepare for a moral dilemma?" and answers: "By reading theories of ethics and understanding what they say and what they mean, how they purport to help us to make better decisions and become better people." Understanding ethical theories does not mean that there is a guarantee that you will make the right decision but, with preparation, you will increase your chances (Schur 2022).

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3. Know the importance of people professionals contributing to discussions in an informed, clear, and confident way to influence others.

Q: Discuss reasons why this is important and the consequences of people practitioners not being willing or able to influence others. (AC 1.3)

We generally have confidence in people that portray competence. Confidence, backed-up with clear and accurate information, helps us to build relationships based on trust in-order-to achieve positive outcomes. As people professionals, it is important to be able to deliver a message with courage and to challenge undesirable or off-brand behaviour to maintain consistency, promote ethical practice and to influence others. The inability or unwillingness to exert influence can lead to undesirable and even detrimental outcomes, e.g. misaligned organisational strategy, diminished employee engagement and resistance, lack of trust and brand clarity.

Courage can also be demonstrated when we take responsibility by admitting that we have done something wrong ourselves and taking steps with continual professional development to improve (CIPD 2025b).

In the podcast hosted by Steven Bartlett, Vinh Giang, Renowned Communication Coach, explains the key rules to influential communication and emphasises the importance of finessing interaction and of 'vocal image'. This is an important skill to master as a people professional as messages must be informed, clear, and delivered with confidence to resonate with stakeholders. He refers to work conducted by Virginia Satir, Clinical Social Worker and Psychotherapist and Mark Bowden, Body Language Expert, to explain techniques used to influence others and to deliver information for better understanding. In this podcast Giang explains that it is not just what we communicate but *how* we communicate, and the perception others have of us based on our speech. He explains that lots of people spend more time on how they look (their visual image) but not much time at all on how they sound (their vocal image). "When people see you for the first time, people make assumptions about you immediately; When you open your mouth to speak, they turn these assumptions into beliefs". We can express confidence by learning a series of behaviours; Larger gestures and making such gestures between the belly button and your eyes ('the power sphere'), using a stronger volume and trying to be more melodic with your voice will portray confidence and an "executive presence". During the podcast, Giang demonstrates that the melody of your voices evokes emotions, much like a piece of music.

Giang explains that there are 5 key hand gestures that can be used that were identified by Virginia Satir, known as The Satir Communication Model (Giang 2025).

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The greatest influence within the business comes from connections and bridging social capital. HR professionals are best placed to develop relationships within teams and groups (bonding social capital) and bridge gaps across the organisation. HR professionals can increase their influence by clarifying the links between people and the organisation's performance (Brower, 2023).

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