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Individual Reflection (Employability Skills)

Introduction (Rolfe's "What?")

My journey toward professional growth began humbly when I relocated to the UK fourteen years ago. At first, I worked as a cleaner, gradually progressing to supervisor and eventually manager—a trajectory that taught me perseverance and resilience. Now, I aspire to launch my own cleaning service and realize I must fill certain skill gaps in areas such as advanced digital tools and structured people management. In line with Rolfe's reflective cycle, I will examine (1) What I have learned and experienced, (2) So What it means for my development, and (3) Now What steps I need to take for success. Throughout this essay, I integrate multiple career-development theories—namely Honey and Mumford's learning styles, SWOT, Johari Window, SMART goals, Personal Development Plan (PDP), Myers-Briggs, Holland's theme codes, Maslow's motivation, Ikigai, and personal branding—to demonstrate the skills and knowledge (Learning Outcome 1) that equip me for career advancement.

Stage 1: "What?"

1. Honey & Mumford

Through the Honey and Mumford model (1986), I discovered my learning style is predominantly Pragmatist with Reflector tendencies. Practically, this means I like to "learn by doing," yet also need time to process feedback. For example, while I thrived in hands-on cleaning tasks, I realized that adopting a Reflector stance—pausing to review staff interactions—was crucial once I stepped into a managerial role.

2. SWOT Analysis

Performing a personal SWOT revealed:

- Strengths: A strong work ethic, on-the-ground leadership experience, familiarity with the cleaning sector.
- Weaknesses: Gaps in formal management training and advanced Excel skills; occasional language barriers.
- Opportunities: A receptive local market for cleaning businesses, plus supportive networks for entrepreneurs.
- Threats: Established competition and possible financial risks.

This direct self-audit (Cottrell, 2021) guided me to target areas needing improvement, thus fostering readiness to apply for higher roles (Learning Outcome 2).

3. Johari Window

Feedback from colleagues highlighted a “blind” area: I often tackled tasks efficiently but did not consistently communicate my vision or invite collaborative input. By openly requesting feedback, I have expanded my “open area” (Luft & Ingham, 1955). This approach made me a more approachable manager and bolstered morale, directly addressing readiness for employability.

4. SMART Goals

Before, I set vague aims like “improve technology skills.” Now, using the SMART framework (Doran, 1981):

- Specific: Complete an online Excel course
- Measurable: Score at least 85% on assessments
- Achievable: Dedicate 3 hours weekly to tutorials
- Relevant: Data skills equip me to run a modern cleaning service
- Time-bound: Finish by the end of next month

This specificity ensures each target aligns with my broader career plan and continuously builds “employability skills” (Learning Outcome 1).

5. Personal Development Plan (PDP)

From the SWOT and SMART findings, I crafted a PDP that prioritizes short-term actions (e.g., finishing advanced Excel and Word courses) and long-term milestones (launching a pilot cleaning service in my region). Regular check-ins help me reflect on progress and refine objectives in real time (Gallagher, 2022).

6. Myers-Briggs

Taking the MBTI (Myers et al., 1998) suggests I am an ISTJ—methodical, organized, yet somewhat reserved. This partially explains how I managed to establish clear systems in previous roles but sometimes struggled to engage staff more socially (Dweck, 2017). Recognizing my own preferences helps me adapt when leading a diverse team.

7. Holland’s Theory

Holland’s RIASEC themes (Holland, 1997) classify me as predominantly Realistic and Enterprising—comfortable with practical tasks and leadership responsibilities. This combination suits me well in a service-based industry, reinforcing my desire to operate a cleaning enterprise. It also justifies focusing on refining my “Conventional” side, for tasks like record-keeping and

marketing.

8. Maslow's Motivation

At times, I became so immersed in day-to-day running of shifts that basic needs like rest and healthy breaks were overlooked. Maslow's theory (1943) emphasizes that addressing foundational needs (adequate rest, minimal stress) paves the way for higher-level achievements and fosters a more motivated workforce—key if I want staff retention in my future company.

9. Ikigai

Reflecting on Ikigai (Katsura, 2017) helped me confirm that I derive satisfaction from providing a valuable service that directly enhances people's environments. Seeing the tangible results of my cleaning work, while also creating stable job opportunities for others, resonates with my sense of purpose.

10. Personal Branding

I neglected personal branding initially, but as Shepherd (2005) discusses, a coherent brand story sets a professional apart. My brand now emphasizes reliability, strong communication, and high-quality service. This not only aids in networking but also appeals to potential clients or future recruits (linking to Learning Outcome 4 about recruitment awareness).

Stage 2: "So What?"

Collectively, these models highlight my strengths—tenacity, practical leadership, a willingness to learn—and clarify my weaknesses, such as insufficient advanced tech skills. By methodically working through Honey & Mumford, SWOT, Johari, and the rest, I see a clear link to the module's learning outcomes:

- Employability Skills & Knowledge (LO1): My rising Excel proficiency and conscious staff-communication improvements enhance my management profile and show real self-awareness (Cottrell, 2021).
- Readiness for Employability (LO2): A deeper grasp of my personal style (ISTJ) and my plan to address skill gaps (finance, marketing) drive confidence to take on higher-level roles or entrepreneurial challenges.
- Setting Goals & Action Plan (LO3): SMART targets feed directly into my PDP, making intangible dreams real. Monthly check-ins ensure accountability.

- Critically Evaluating Recruitment & Selection (LO4): Understanding that staff differ in style (Honey & Mumford) and motivation (Maslow) will inform my future interview questions and onboarding steps. By appreciating these nuances, I can tailor fair selection processes and offer training or well-being support that keeps staff engaged.

By weaving these insights into an ongoing cycle of reflection, I reinforce my sense of direction. Rather than drifting from one opportunity to another, I commit to structured skill-building and purposeful networking (Holland, 1997).

Stage 3: “Now What?”

Upskilling & Ongoing Development

Concretely, I plan to complete advanced Excel training by [specific date], then move on to short courses in small-business finance. This addresses my main identified weakness (tech/finance). I will also schedule monthly blocks for reflection—using the PDP to verify progress (Dweck, 2017).

Improving Communication

From Johari Window insights, I will design at least one group check-in per week in my current role. Once I own a cleaning business, I aim to implement an “open-door policy,” invite suggestions, and run regular briefings. This fosters transparent workplace culture and helps employees see their input matters (Gallagher, 2022).

Personal Well-Being

Revisiting Maslow, I intend to promote healthy work-life balance for myself and any future staff—ensuring that basic needs and emotional support are part of our work culture. This prevents burnout and underpins better performance in the long run.

Brand Building & Recruitment

By regularly posting short updates on professional platforms and ensuring consistent marketing messages, I will further develop my personal (and eventual company) brand. This credibility, in turn, will attract higher-caliber applicants when I recruit employees (Shepherd, 2005). I plan to design job descriptions that reflect both the Realistic/Enterprising nature of cleaning as well as potential for personal growth—emphasizing that staff will get the same chance to develop that I had.

Long-Term Vision

Finally, Ikigai remains my compass: I want to run a local service that contributes meaningfully to making workspaces and homes more pleasant—while continuing to expand. Regularly revisiting my “why” ensures any future decisions stay aligned with

my core mission: combining self-improvement, community service, and financial sustainability (Katsura, 2017).

Conclusion

Using Rolfe's reflective cycle, I have clarified the benefits of applying multiple career-development models to shape my path. By discovering my Pragmatist/Reflector style (Honey & Mumford, 1986), auditing my strengths and gaps via SWOT, systematically setting SMART goals, and integrating theory-driven insights from Johari Window, Myers-Briggs, Holland, Maslow, Ikigai, and personal branding, I have a robust plan to advance into entrepreneurship. This evidence-based reflection meets each learning outcome: it shows my employability skills, readiness to tackle personal development, a well-structured action plan, and a growing capability to recruit and select in an inclusive, strategic way. Ultimately, the next phase ("Now What?") translates all of these reflections into purposeful action—upskilling in technology, refining communication practices, nurturing employee well-being, and building a recognizable brand that resonates with clients and future hires alike.

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