

Skills for the Workplace

Module Assignment Submission

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Statement of Confirmation of Authenticity

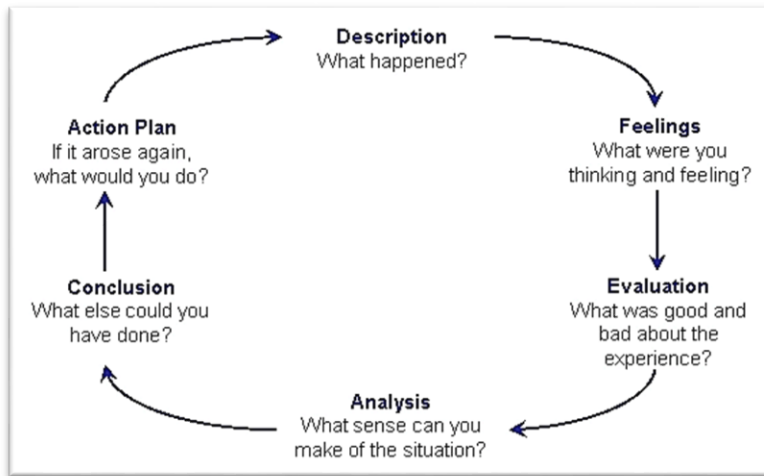
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Part 2: Reflection on Skills developed during the Business Plan Project



Gibbs (1988)

2.1 Description

I decided to start a business and write up a business plan, this was something that I have never done before, so it was all a new challenge for me. I decided to begin a business in dog walking, and this is because I recognised there are niches in the local dog walking market that I could use to my potential and use them as my unique selling points (which will make my business stand out from the rest) especially from the in-depth research that I carried out on the local dog walking business/competition and opportunities.

In order for me to start up the new business I need to sell my personal transportation, so then I can obtain the funding that I would need as a requirement in helping me to make this business work, for example through buying equipment like a van, insurances, licences, and even the essential tools and training for me to be able to be successful in my new dog walking business.

Initially I did not have any basic knowledge in setting up a business before I started this assignment. I therefore had to research information online, using government statistics researching local and national laws and collaborating with the council in person. I compared other competitors for strengths and their weaknesses. In looking for a niche in the market to exploit to find my unique selling points I also asked local competitors about their products and services by questioning them verbally, whilst pretending to be a customer that was interested in their services, having previously prewritten out a feedback questionnaire that would help me find, compare, and contrast between the local competition.

In order for me to understand the correct procedures and have the correct legalities to start up a business as a sole trader. I will have to register for a self-assessment while also contacting HMRC where I must explain that I am going to be starting up a sole trading business. Because I have never done this before I found this task very awkward at the beginning of the assignment

The name of the business is to be called Fetch. The name was chosen, because after carrying out in depth research using “search for a trademark” (Gov.Uk NO DATE) this confirms and proves that there is no other dog walking business with the same trademark/branding locally and so I would be able to register the new business under that name legally.

2.2 Feelings

Since I have never written out a business plan before or ever considered writing a business plan (especially because I was in the military for most of my young adult life), when I realized what this assignment would involve, I felt a sense of extreme anxiety as I knew that I had been handed an Aegean task that I did not believe I would be able to complete. I knew there could be lots of issues and stress along the way, especially with using the cash flow charts and other expenditures, for example financial bookkeeping and learning about the workings of setting up a business and acquiring new knowledge.

When I have been contacting some of the local competition about their current services and what else they provide and comparing them against each other in order for me to find a weakness within the market, I had some obstacles along the way with some of my local competitors and that was trying to gain their trust in answering some of my questions. The reasons for not gaining their trust could be because of my accent not being local to the area of operations, and unfortunately, also, I have the same accent to the local dog snatchers (Perkins, 2021; Robertson, 2021). Having been warned from one of the dog walking businesses “not to come near my house and that my partner is in the police”, this made me really annoyed and quite frustrated and it put a hold on me for a while in continuing with the feedback from local competitors. However, within several days I did manage to pluck up the courage and continue with my research, although after this incident it was decided to carry out the research further afield in order to not compromise my aims and arouse suspicion. This was because I did not want a red mark against my name in the area of future operations before I actually began.

While I was submitting this assignment, I struggled to attach the cash flow forms, due to the size of the format from Excel to Word which in turn made me frustrated that I could not submit it in the original timeframe. This turned out to be because I have the shortened version of Word Office 365 which meant that I was unable to attach a section break as this was unavailable to me. In order for me to change formats i.e., portrait into landscape, the solution in the end was learning from the help that I received through the university I.T. department, and the solution was to use the snipping tool which was something that I had never done before. The other reasons for my struggle were due to the fact of it being

remote working and so it was harder to explain the issues that I was having due to a breakdown in communication. For example, in trying to explain myself about what the problems were and not having the correct knowledge or terminology to explain in a meaningful manner for the receivers to understand the information that was being sent from my end. According to the Berlo 1960s model of communication having knowledge of the message context helps both sender and receiver make communication more effective (Juneja, No Date).

2.3 Evaluation

In starting up a business, initially I was not sure where I was going to begin, however, while carrying out research I was getting more self-confident within myself and found that from carrying out an investigation into the competition while also researching information on starting up a business I was starting to gain more knowledge in my new field of dog walking. I realised that I could make this happen and take more risks in doing so.

In the beginning I did not realise all the legalities that were put in place in order to open a business, for example, different insurances, DBS, licences, and taxes. However, after carrying out all the in-depth research in exploring the advantages and disadvantages and probing the local competition, I believe I would be noticeably more confident in starting up a new business.

While I originally felt overwhelmed with worry and anxiety in the preliminary stages of the business start-up as it was a new challenge for me, I can only think of one thing that was a negative experience. That was when I decided to conduct enquiries while analysing the local competition and where I was aiming to exploit a niche in the market. This was because of my accent as people seemed very hesitant of me asking questions and I felt annoyed at my local competition judging me just because of my accent.

2.4 Analysis

I have realised that I can start up my own business since doing this task. I have had to gather more in-depth information due to having to find my resources from real people by physically collaborating with the local council and communicating with the local competition. I have also had to make phone calls to other businesses for van fitting and filling out online insurances and training quotes for dog walking and pet first aid. I have noticed with some of the public, that few people are willing to help explain (for example answering questions) when I am carrying out research, especially if you have a different accent and you are not there for their services.

At the beginning of this task, we were asked to complete a questionnaire on how we rate ourselves on our entrepreneurship skills before writing up a business plan and completing the same questionnaire afterwards (see appendix 1). I scored over 100 marks more than what I thought I was capable of in the early stage of filling out the first questionnaire.

My strategic planning has improved within the business market, for example, where I was able to produce three unique selling points from planning, researching, and having to make more acute decisions based on the evidence that I researched. This means I am understanding more and improving and gaining more self-confidence from having professional interaction and improving my communication and interpersonal skills while collaborating with the local Borough councils, speaking to local vets, and collecting data. Now as a potential entrepreneur I feel that I can take more risks and be willing to pursue more opportunities into the near future.

2.5 Conclusion

From the beginning of June, I never really thought that I would open a business, but now I believe I have the potential to do so. I was given a task in setting up my own business, from writing out a plan from scratch. In doing so, this has given me more confidence in order to make that an actual reality. It has been a new positive experience researching, gathering, and analysing data in setting up a business and a positive experience for me though researching and finding gaps within the local dog walking market. I can now use this to my advantage from researching the laws and what legislation I would need in place, so the new business stays within the legal guidelines. Before I scored quite low in understanding the legal issues of starting up a business, whereas now my score is higher in this department. I initially did not believe in myself, where I also scored on the lower echelon, however as time has progressed and proof of gains being made from the research I have carried out, I can now start to have faith and have self-belief knowing that I am more able and capable than I was before with the knowledge that I have acquired during the task.

2.6 Action Plan

My action plan would be to establish communications with animal shelters, where I would volunteer myself to offer help with local dog walking groups online and helping at the local dog home centres. This will help in building trust where I would learn more by gaining more hands-on experience, for example dog walking, dog washing and feeding. Volunteering myself means that I am getting to meet people face to face (Dogs trust, 2017) where I could start networking and potentially, I could be vouched for in the future after building up personal relationships This will help to build a positive reputation within the local animal

care sector, which would give me credibility and could help in attracting customers sooner.

I would also need to brush up further on my I.T skills, where I can attend further online courses or buying a guidebook and self-teaching myself during the evenings. I could also attend evening workshops, if possible, as face-to-face interaction with people will help me with interpersonal skills.

References

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APPENDIX 1

Entrepreneur Tests

Leader	15.	3	50.	5	85.	4	12
Dealing w/ Others	16.	3	51.	5	86.	4	12
Perspective Taking	17.	5	52.	4	87.	4	13
Prioritizing	18.	4	53.	4	88.	4	12
Business Savvy	19.	3	54.	2	89.	3	8
Passion	20.	5	55.	3	90.	5	13
Resiliency	21.	5	56.	1	91.	3	9
Independence	22.	4	57.	3	92.	4	11
Self-Discipline	23.	4	58.	5	93.	5	14
Optimism	24.	3	59.	4	94.	5	11
Vision	25.	3	60.	5	95.	5	13
Creativity / Resourcefulness	26.	3	61.	4	96.	4	11
Self-Awareness	27.	3	62.	4	97.	4	11
Persistence	28.	3	63.	4	98.	5	12
Patience	29.	2	64.	4	99.	3	9
Self-Confidence	30.	3	65.	5	100.	5	13
Drive	31.	4	66.	5	101.	5	14
Support	32.	2	67.	3	102.	3	8
Risk	33.	2	68.	5	103.	4	11
Openness / Flexibility	34.	3	69.	4	104.	3	10
Common Sense	35.	5	70.	4	105.	4	13
Total							392

The first Entrepreneur test

Leader	15.	4	50.	5	85.	5	14
Dealing w/ Others	16.	4	51.	5	86.	5	14
Perspective Taking	17.	5	52.	4	87.	4	114
Prioritizing	18.	5	53.	4	88.	4	13
Business Savvy	19.	3	54.	4	89.	3	10
Passion	20.	5	55.	3	90.	5	13
Resiliency	21.	5	56.	3	91.	3	11
Independence	22.	4	57.	3	92.	4	11
Self-Discipline	23.	4	58.	5	93.	5	14
Optimism	24.	3	59.	4	94.	5	12
Vision	25.	5	60.	5	95.	5	15
Creativity / Resourcefulness	26.	4	61.	4	96.	4	12
Self-Awareness	27.	5	62.	4	97.	4	13
Persistence	28.	4	63.	4	98.	5	13
Patience	29.	4	64.	4	99.	3	11
Self-Confidence	30.	5	65.	5	100.	5	15
Drive	31.	5	66.	5	101.	5	15
Support	32.	3	67.	3	102.	3	9
Risk	33.	4	68.	5	103.	5	14
Openness / Flexibility	34.	4	69.	4	104.	4	12
Common Sense	35.	5	70.	4	105.	5	14
Total							493

The second Entrepreneur test