

University of Wales Trinity Saint David



Professional Career Development (BMSW4005_LON)

Assessment 2

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Introduction

This reflection is concentrated on my learning experience in the Professional Career Development module at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London. The main aim of this journey was to improve my skills and knowledge which contribute toward working effectively and to boost my chances of employment.

In this report, I am going to discuss about my career development goals using the Kolb's model of reflection. I will also be explaining my experience, observations and making recommendations of the role play interview with Cristina Chiciuc (2023334) held on 19/12/2021 for the position of Sales Manager. Please refer to the Recruitment & Selection and Appendix sections below for more details on this.

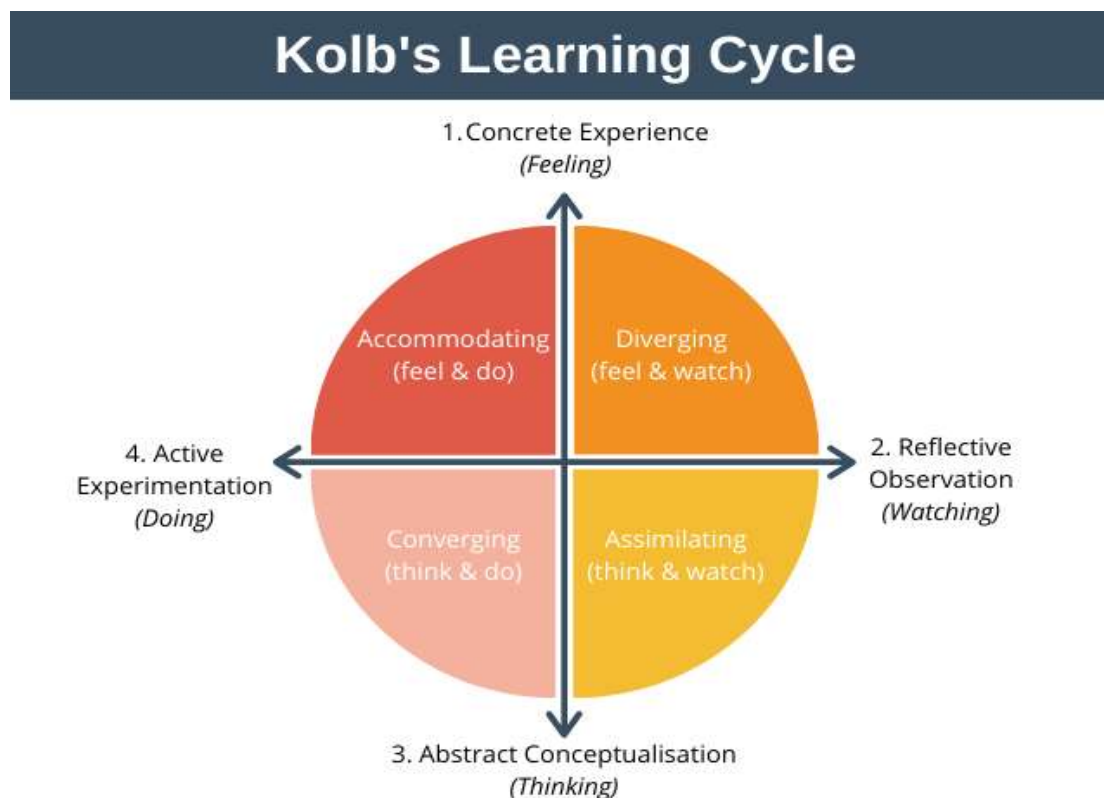


Image source [here](#)

Why professional career development is important?

In my opinion, the professional development is the learning and development of skills or knowledge to enhance one's current work practice and future career. As a professional, thinking, organising and taking careful steps towards the desired career goals offers not only some potential to look forward to but also contribute towards satisfaction in professional as well as in everyday life.

Reflection on PCD module

In addition to understanding learning styles and the importance of critical self-reflection, the module taught me why it is essential to focus on professional development and why it is important to plan it out properly in order to future proof your career as a professional.

The personal development plan made me think through the key attributes, feel how best to develop, and improve each attribute to achieve my career goals. Over this period, my thinking, the organisation, and actions for desired career goals improved significantly. This thought process of one's ability to look back and evaluate a situation with the aim to improve is something that not only that can be applied to career development but also to improve everyday life. Below is a true reflection of my own experience, what I have noticed throughout this learning experience.

Things I have learned about career development

I am a hardworking professional who enjoy the challenge and I have the skills to effectively motivate and inspire a team of professionals. I have always been someone who meets deadlines and comfortable talking to clients and other stakeholders alike.

We learned the power of written communication, why the body language is important under the ETW module. Over this period, my ability to deliver a powerful message that captures the audience improved considerably.

Leaning on someone else's experience is a great way to gain knowledge and introduce yourself to other opportunities therefore, job shadowing to learn about different jobs broaden and deepen your skills, experience increase your potential to add value. It is evident that the successful people who owns their career paths, set their goals and develop timeline, including milestones to achieve them.

How do I feel about it now?

To become an effective IT project manager, they need a combination of leadership and technical skills to efficiently do their job, and I believe I have both of these skills. Skills to explain complicated tasks to my co-workers and help them test, troubleshoot tasks. It is with a deep sense of satisfaction I must say that my leadership and communication skills improved significantly and I am a much more confident presenter, writer and a speaker than I was ever before.

How did I progress in PCD module?

One thing that really impressed me was that it encouraged critical thinking by challenging us to reflect on our own learning styles whilst participating in practice exercises, watching some of the best video resources or simply by learning from each other's experiences.

In my opinion, this cultivated a culture of “reflective thinking” that will change the way everyone thinks and will operate in the future. Amongst other things, this module encouraged me to be more competitive, effective and above all, it taught me how to be more productive and add value.

Skills I possess and skills gaps

I enjoy ideas, theories and solving practical problems therefore someone who enjoys the doing aspect. I also believe in processes, eager to know the big picture and well-thought-out plans which probably explains that fall into the “converging” category below.

The software industry increasingly has high demand for hybrid project managers which is a significant deviation from the traditional project management function, the companies look for driven and innovative, dynamic professionals with proven track records, delivering accelerated return on investment, reduced costs, and enabling long-term corporate growth through strong cross-functional leadership whilst delivering robust and commercially viable IT strategies to achieve key business objectives. The demand for these skills are ever more increasing and how you can make sure you keep up-to-date with current trends, new and emerging technologies requires a constant and all-encompassing attitude and agility.

What is my learning style?

I am a continues learner with a vivid passion for business driven by technology and I enjoy the doing aspect which I believe makes me belong to the converging category. People who fall into this learning style are logical thinkers who prefer to think things through, apply their knowledge in a hands-on way and working with other people in teams, which probably explains why I am a seasoned software professional. David Kolb describes four Learning Styles outlining how different people prefer to learn new things (EPM, 2020):

1. Diverging (Feeling and Watching)
 - Prefer to watch than do.
 - Like working in groups.
2. Assimilating (Watching and Thinking)
 - Enjoy ideas however less interested in people.
 - Enjoy ideas but not their practical application.
3. Converging (Doing and Thinking)
 - Enjoy ideas and theory and solving practical problems.
4. Accommodating (Doing and Feeling)
 - Prefer learning through doing.
 - Prefer to use their gut feel rather than a detailed analysis.

Everybody learns in different ways. Some people learn better in groups while others learn better themselves. It is interesting to know what style we are so we can study and learn better in the future by using learning styles that are better suited for us. In this module, we learned about Three main learning styles that are Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic.



Image source [here](#)

	Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic	Other	Reflections
Leadership	Watching business and political speeches on YouTube, participating in conferences, learning from my own management hierarchy		Doing by leading a team of technical experts, setting examples as a leader		I enjoy the doing aspect and solving practical problems. Taking a step back from doing to reflect and review, listening to the advice from my line manager helps me to feel more confident and to become a better leader in the future.
Team Building			In my job, I am responsible for delegating tasks, motivating teams and managing projects end-to-end.		In my knowledge team building and collaboration is a human experience. And to do this, we should refocus on what works, what doesn't at the end of each project (lessons learned) through brainstorming and team discussions.
Conflict Resolver			As someone manages teams of people with varied skills and culture, I often have to deal with these situations.		A self-reflection, prior to entering a difficult conversation as well as throughout and after, can be helpful to avoid destructive scenarios, and to build lasting relationships with others through communication. As a manager, I always try to resolve conflicts as quickly as possible through dialog and always propose a plan of action that people can agree.
Numerical Skills	Doing mental arithmetic, practicing lots of examples				With my ambition to become a CEO, I recognise this as an area that I need to improve. I think the only way for me to get better is to practice. I will practice with my children twice a week for the next 6 weeks.

Time Management	Planning, scheduling work for others, and presenting them to stakeholders		I find having a daily planner is extremely important to maintain work-life balance		I maintain a daily planner that I have created for the next 4 weeks and I will review it at the end of every week.
Communication	Presentations, writing technical specifications and explaining complex tasks				At work, clear communication help you build healthy relationships with others. Often, the frustrations comes from lack of clarity. Through open/honest communication, and by setting the expectations right at the very beginning a lot of these can be avoided.
Motivator			Doing and working with the team		To motivate someone you need to understand what frustrates them. As mentioned above Through open and honest dialog, clear expectations and objectives usually help avoid those frustrations. Also, understand the strengths and weakness of the members and by supporting them by removing obstacles for them to deliver makes teams more productive.
As Negotiator					I think the only way for me to get better is to practice. I will get more involved with the bidding process.
Written Skills	By writing design specifications that can be consumed equally by none technical and technical staff.		Engaging with stakeholders via emails, meetings and presentations.		My writing skills, body-language and my ability to deliver a message in general improved significantly during this course. I will continue to excel in this area by listening more and by putting what I learn into practice.

Career development plan

In my opinion, career success is far more likely to sustain when someone creates a professional development plan (PDP) that can guide them as they make decisions to progress in their career. A PDP will help you to identify skills you still need to develop to move forward in your career and will help you identify steps to gaining those skills.

Learning and Development Need	Type of Development	Timeline	Who is Responsible?	Comments
Gain additional skills in planning tools to increase my knowledge and improve my efficiency in daily tasks	Attend intermediate and high-level Azure DevOps courses through Udemy online. Partner with peer staff to learn new DevOps functions.	Complete by the end of my next 6-month review period.	I will research available coursework in mid or upper-level Azure DevOps skills and seek approval from my manager. I will find a peer team member to shadow and learn new DevOps skills.	
Explore my interests in the field of Software design, documentation with an emphasis on SEO and data analytics.	Attend AWS regional conference and research how my interests in data analytics will specifically enhance my current position.	Complete conference and occupational research before the end of my annual performance evaluation discussion.	I will research and seek approval to attend the next annual conference and provide a summary to my manager of what the conference provides attendees. I will explore my interests in data analytics and share my findings to my manager.	
Gain additional leadership skills in managing a portfolio of concurrent projects	Attend LinkedIn portfolio management course online or partner with peer PM staff to learn related and necessary planning skills.	Complete by the end of my next 6-month review period.	I will research available coursework and seek approval from my manager to assign me additional projects in the new year.	
Improve public speech	Research online on this topic and follow some good public speaking examples – YouTube.	This will be an ongoing undertake, I will be looking to seize more opportunities to speak publicly for different audiences of varying sizes.	Work with my manager more on project kick-off meetings, presentations and lead on internal team catch ups.	

Recruitment and Selection

Cristina's CV was reviewed prior to the interview and was shortlisted as we thought that her qualifications and experience makes her a good fit for this job. The interview was conducted via teams over a period of 10 minutes. A set of 5 questions (each carries 10 marks). These questions were to test her knowledge on the job you have applied for, cultural fit, teamwork, attitude (please see the appendix section for the questions).

Octopus is a new and upcoming online fashion brand, 1mn turnover with our head office based in Liverpool Street London. There are 10 employees that includes Two sales consultants with an amazing working culture.

I herewith submit a score based on Cristina's replies along with my comments and recommendations for the Human Resources to take this forward.

Essential skills

- Ability to communicate, inspire and motivate
- Proven ability to drive the sales process from plan to close
- Excellent mentoring, coaching and good people management skills
- Excellent time management skills to maximise their ability to reach goals
- Ability to identify, recruit and hire talented sales representatives.

Key responsibilities

- Developing and implementing strategic sales plans that expand a company's customer base and solidify its presence
- Achieving growth and hitting sales targets by successfully managing sales teams and by assessing the team's strengths and weaknesses
- Establishing productive and professional relationships with key personnel in assigned customer accounts
- Building and promoting healthy, long-lasting customer relations by partnering with them
- Developing and implementing new sales initiatives, strategies and programmes to capture key demographics
- Providing daily reports of field sales success and communicating the Voice of the Customer.

Conclusion

- In conclusion, we all have different styles of learning, and it is about finding which style works best for you. If you know which style works for you learn it make leaning much easier. You can also be a mix of styles.

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Appendix

Questions

1. Tell me something about yourself that is not on your CV?
2. Why did you decide to apply for this managerial position?
3. What are your biggest strengths?
4. What is your biggest weakness?
5. What do you know about our company?
6. Why should we hire you?

Remarks

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Knowledge of the job							✓			
<i>Comments</i>	As someone who lead teams of sales and marketing, Cristina clearly understands the job function, has the necessary leadership skills.									
Experience						✓				
<i>Comments</i>	Cristina clearly has the experience on traditional marketing channels however, I did not find enough evidence on whether she is capable of handling social media, SEO and online marketing trends.									
Cultural fit					✓					
<i>Comments</i>	I have my doubts whether she will be able to manage a team of native speakers. Her speech is not 100% clear and the order in which the information is presented is not very satisfactory.									
Can be relied upon to deliver on commitments							✓			
<i>Comments</i>	No doubt.									
Teamwork							✓			
<i>Comments</i>	Seems to be a good team player who would lead a team by example and her track records shows that she can delegating tasks, motivate team members.									