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Introduction

Professional Career Development is a desideratum of each of us and should be a permanent concern of every person interested in exploiting their existing skills, acquiring new ones, at the same time as gathering satisfaction from a challenging job and maintaining an ascendant trend of evolution.

The purpose of this report is to focus on my professional career development by analyzing my skills, qualities, defects, shortcomings, desires and their feasibility in order to meet growth, to fulfill my goals and to be prepared for what employers want. For this reason I have applied a series of theories to obtain objective results. I formulated SMART objectives for setting achievable employment goals. I used Johari's window tool for a better self understanding. I conducted a SWOT analysis to spot opportunities.

Because Professional Career Development is based on a continuous learning process, I will talk in this paper about learning styles and I will show which of the 3 VAK learning styles suits me.

Moreover, this report aims to present a personal reflection on the skills I obtained from working on the job interview role play and to explain what improvements this has brought to my professional career development by putting this scenario into practice, referring to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory.

Recruitment and Selection

Reflection on the role play

For me, working on composing questions and formulating answers in the role play represented a double challenge, because I had to experience it from two perspectives. Once because I had to transpose myself in the person of an interviewer and I realized that behind every question there is a whole strategy so as to ensure obtaining satisfactory answers from which to extract as much information as possible. Secondly, from the perspective of a candidate, I tried to offer sufficiently comprehensive answers, which would convince and enhance my position, but which would not be boring at the same time.

Looking back at the experience, I observe that at a certain level I felt like I was struggling and I think learning happened when I realized how important experience is in activities like this, because experience in interviews, no matter whatever side of the table you sit at, greatly facilitates the process and helps you develop mechanisms to succeed to formulate exactly the right questions and exactly the pertinent and objective answers. I was unaware how to give but also how to get information by the most efficient means possible.

Moreover, practicing the interview scenario determined personal growth by directly forcing self-analysis, because I had to put on paper my aspirations regarding the professional life, to summarize the qualities I have and to make them work for my own benefit.

I think that practicing in this way, for me at least, I feel that a little more relaxation has been installed when it comes to an interview. I feel that I am one step closer to understanding how to dissect a question so that I can find out its purpose and be able to fulfill it. This kind of collaborative activity helped me become a lot more adaptive and responsive and it showed indeed that „people create themselves through the choice of the actual occasions that they live through” (Kolb, 1984, page 63).

According to Kolb's theory, we can highlight four basic learning styles: the diverging style, the assimilating style, the converging style, the accomodating style (Kolb, Boyatzis, Mainemelis, 1999, page 5-7).

As the Kolb reflective cycle suggests, the goal is for the individual to actively participate in the experience so they can learn from it. I surely can relate what I experienced to this theory, reinforcing the fact that a person can't always learn by simply observing or reading.

According to Kolb, an individual has to complete the four stages cycle for an effective learning. For the concrete experience stage the role play served as a basis of observation. In this moment I think I just checked the next two stages, which are the reflective observation and the abstract conceptualization. The fourth stage, active experimentation, will be reached when I will apply what I learned to another situation.

As for the learning style that applies to me, it is considered that not everyone has a particular preference for a specific learning style, but that we can talk more about a preferred, more accentuated style or a balance between all of them (Kolb, Kolb, 2017, page 24). I would say that the assimilation style is more accentuated in my personal case.

Self Motivation

In most cases, self-motivation makes the difference between those who fail to reach their goals, year after year, and those who achieve one goal after another.

Even though I'm doing OK on self-motivation, which means I'm not failing, I certainly could achieve much more. The self-motivation quiz has helped me to see more clearly that what's keeping me behind could be my poor self confidence and my ignorance regarding setting strong goals. So in order to achieve what I want, I have to schedule my time and resources effectively to not self-sabotage my plans.

My internal drive to develop and achieve is based on the dream of becoming independent in the beauty industry. First, by laying the foundations of my own business, and then by sharing the secrets of make-up with others. But from here until the real fulfillment of the goals, I tend to let things go by themselves and lose sight of how important it is to impose myself and especially to respect the steps I have designed to reach my destination.

From now on I intend to practice my goal setting skills to build my self-motivation and stop treating this step so superficial.

Learning Styles

According to the VAK learning style theory, the three main sensory receivers (Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic) determine the dominant learning style, as it is shown in the figure 1.

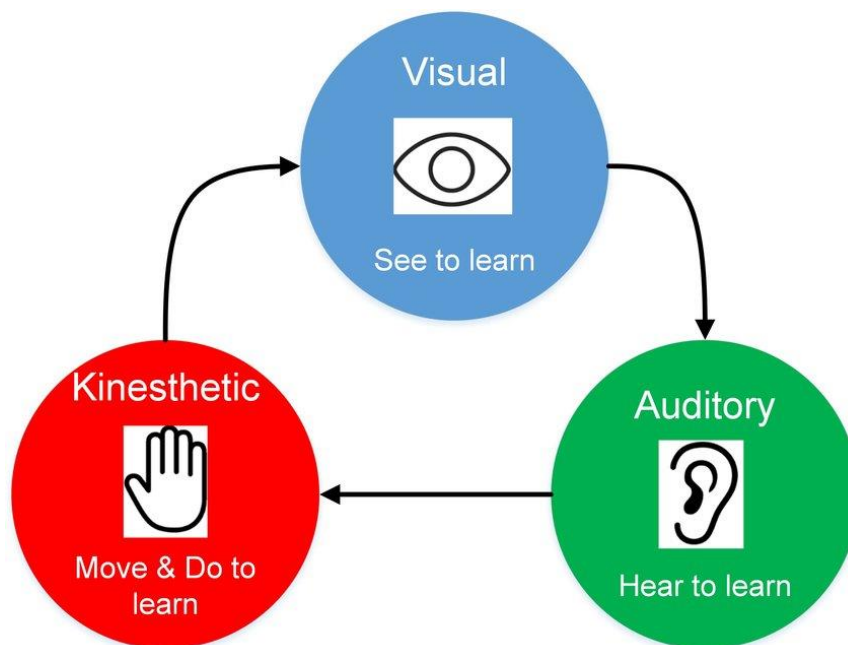


Fig. 1 VAK Learning Styles

By filling up the VAK Learning Styles Self-Assessment Questionnaire I found out that I have a visual learning style, which means that learning by seeing, observing things or pictures, displays, diagrams, demonstrations etc., would be the best way for me. Directions and instructions are important to me, I prefer to read the instructions or to watch someone else do something first.

I also do tend to think in pictures, I do like to take notes and I do solve problems by planning in advance and organizing my thoughts by writing them down.

SWOT Analysis

I conducted a SWOT analysis to identify my employment potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.



Fig. 2 SWOT Analysis

Strenghts:

- I have work experience in a salon and also as being self employed
- I have artistic skills and passion for beauty industry
- I`m a communicative, people oriented person
- I took specialized make up courses, so I have recognised certifications
- My work is appreciated and I have a consistent portofolio

Weaknesses:

- Lack of goal setting attitude
- Lack of experience in managing a team
- Lack of focus on my goals
- I tend to deviate from the plan

Opportunities:

- As the industry expands, there will always show up new techniques and trends that will require training and education to keep up with the development
- Personal development
- Building personal network and relationships
- In time I could specialize in other fields of the beauty industry, as my passion arises
- I can set up a salon and build a team of people to work with

Threats:

- Competition
- Extreme development in the industry, market oversaturation
- People who offer the same services without having the necessary certification at lower prices
- Affected financial situation due to upcoming economic, health crisis

To guarantee I will achieve my goals, I have to deal with the threats and weaknesses

Johari Window

To understand more about how I see myself and how I present myself to others, I used the Johari Window model. It helped me learn about what I can improve, what are my weak spots, if there is a damaging behavioral pattern for career and other beneficial aspects.

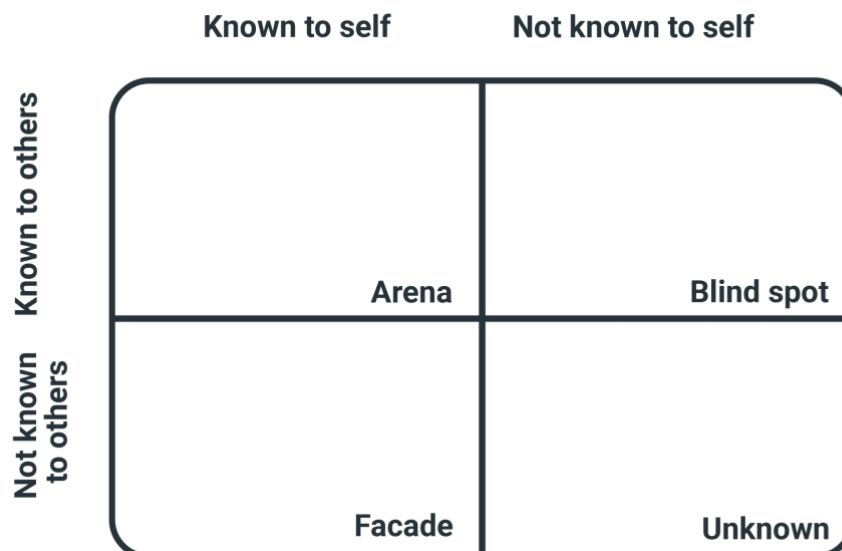


Fig. 3 Johari Window

The open area	The blind spot
Talkative Qualified Passionated Enthuziastic Experienced Team oriented Creative Organised Friendly	Trustable Potential Relaxed Bold Attention issues
The hidden area	The unknown
Funny People pleaser Emphatic Fear of failure Dreamer Nervous Sensible	Brave Idealistic Ingenious Spontaneous Wise

Table: Personal Johari Window

Considering what I inserted in the Johari Window, my action plan will include the following steps:

First, I have to improve what is written in the Blind Spot, my attention issues in particular.

Second, I have to apply more transparency about the Hidden area and see what I can share.

Third, I will use the Unknown area by exposing myself to challenges that require those attributes, to remove the doubt.

SMART Objectives

To better formulate my career goals by using the SMART system, I will start by describing my short and long term goals.

In the short term, I aim to participate in another several make-up courses for specific techniques, and then apply to be able to become a trainer for them myself.

In the long run, I propose to work on opening a joint venture, one part to deal with beauty services, and another to focus on training new stakeholders

So my SMART objectives would be, as we see in the table below:

SPECIFIC	MEASURABLE	ATTAINABLE	RELEVANT	TIMELY
Specialization in rare make-up styles, with specific techniques	Obtaining the qualification of independent professional	Attending make-up courses	The experience in niche techniques will put me in an advantage over other make-up artists who practice by using traditional techniques	Starting in the next 5 months
Developing managing skills	Work in a managing position for at least one year	Obtain a beauty salon manager position	This step will put me in situations in which I could perfect my skills for the future	In the next maximum 2 years
Become a make-up artist trainer	Obtain qualification to teach	Attending a trainee program	I will be able and certified to train people to become make up artists	In the next up to 5 years

Fig. 2 Professional SMART Objectives

The World of Employment

What employers want



Fig. 5 Positive Character Traits

In addition to all the positive traits listed in the figure above, which are nice for an employee to have, employers also require some additional important criteria to be matched.

Perhaps the most important factors for an employer are: employee`s experience, employee`s teamwork skills, reliable employees, initiative, maturity and willingness to learn.

As for me, I consider that there is always room for improvement and keep up to date with the experience and I can say that I am happy to meet the other criteria.

Employment Goals

Starting from my background, I have to mention I've spent the past as a make-up artist. During this time, I've enjoyed my work in the salon I worked for, but also by working for myself. I am looking to specialize in the beauty arena by taking the next step, meaning managing a team of specialists in the industry. Ultimately, maybe three to five years down the road, I'd love to open a company that offers training services for novice make-up artists, in addition to the usual beauty services.

As I was presenting in the SMART Objective section, I did set some short-term and long-term goals, as follows: a short-term goal would be to obtain the position of beauty salon

manager and to participate in another several make-up courses for specific techniques, and as long-term goals I aim to run my own business, one part to deal with beauty services, and another to focus on training new stakeholders

Professional Development Plan

The above self-assessment regarding my professional interests and skills but also the SMART goals I set for my professional development have lead to the present professional development plan (PDP) in which I will describe the actionable steps to make for achieving my career goals.

I designed the following strategy to achieve my goals:

The next 2 months	I will build my professional network by integrate myself in interest groups in the field of beauty industry. I will look for specialized groups on Facebook and I will join them and I will build a LinkedIn profile. In this way I will make me known and I will expand my contact area.
The next 5 months	I will select and take at least one make-up course with techniques in which I am not yet specialized to differentiate myself from the whole table of basic make-up artists.
The next 2 years	I will attend as many webinars as possible about running a business, how to start a business, how to promote your services and how to always bring innovation to the market and other topics related to developing and maintaining a business.
The next 2 years	I will apply for the position of beauty salon manager, where I intend to work for a period of at least one year.
The next 5 years	Obtaining teaching qualification to become a make-up artist trainer
The next 5 years	Open a beauty salon and a make-up training center

Conclusion

We cannot talk about a real professional career development without involving the steps that must be taken in this path, the step of knowing ourselves, of active learning, of experimenting, of putting into practice, of showing commitment to what we want to achieve, of reflecting and of planning ahead depending on the results obtained along the way.

The work on this professional career development report represents a very useful insight on my personal attributes and it has improved self-awareness.

All the techniques and theories I used for a better understanding of my traits made it easier and accessible to reflect on myself and once I determined my desired career, it was much easier for me to recognize the stepping stones to end up in that role. I will use the information I gathered to make decisions about my professional future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Application form

Job application form

Application for Beauty Salon Manager

Your details

Name: Elena Deprez

Education and training

Please give details:

In 2018 I graduated from National College "Vasile Alecsandri" in Iași, Romania.

In the present I'm a University of Wales student, where I follow a program of communication studies which allows me to improve my team work skills alongside with my communication skills, the ones I need to prevent and solve conflicts and other leadership and management skills that I need.

Qualifications

Please give details:

I followed multiple make up and grooming courses provided by some companies that form personnel for this kind of work. All my diplomas have been obtained by finishing all my modules and are internationally recognized.

Alongside all the information I acquired and all the practical activities I carried out, these courses improved my creativity and started my thirst for knowledge and experimenting all kinds of new ideas and technics.

Employment history

Your current or most recent employer

Name of employer: Own business, individual activity

Job title: Make-up artist, manicurist

Length of time with employer: 3 years

Reason for leaving: Still working in the present day

Duties:

Providing make-up services for interested customers;

Providing a clean and hygienic work space;

Facebook page administration and constant interaction with customers that use this communication channel;

Maintaining a strong bond with customers in order to get feed-back and to program them for another encounters;

Organizing my agenda in days, weeks and even months;

Creating electronic format situations, databases and tables for monitoring the financial situation and the number of customers I have each month in order to keep an exact track of money income and client flux.

Previous employers

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

In 2020, when KASTA MORELLY FASHION WEEK took place in Iași, Romania, I collaborated with the organizers and I was a make-up artist for the entire duration of this event.

I was responsible of doing the make-up for the models that were presented in the course of the present event.

I permanently gave the organizers advice and indications regarding the optimal choices of make-up styles.

From this experience I developed the ability to work in a fast-paced environment and excellent organizational skills.

Supporting statement

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

In my opinion, the activities that I carried out until now made me an excellent communicator and a very organized, diplomat and customer focussed person.

Ambition, enthusiasm and constant aspiration define me, this being the reason I'm interested in integrating in a friendly team with which I can share the passion for all beauty related things and activities and exploiting my constant drive to succeed.

In the same time, for this particular job my opinion is that a great advantage is the fact that I have a good understanding of the beauty industry, as I described before.

I want to point out that I love working with people, which makes it easier for me to combine my talent with a professional attitude and work ethic that will make me capable of making good decisions and leading a team.

Last, but not least, my attention to detail, communication skills, good teamwork and the desire to continue maintaining a tactful, friendly manner weigh quite heavily.

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 who 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.

Kasta Morrely: +40 721357357; Email: akm.kastamorrely@gmail.com

Clara Beauty Salon: +40 758775017; Email: clara.beauty_salon@gmail.com

Declaration

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

Name: Elena Deprez

Signature: Elena Deprez

Date: 7th November 2021

Appendix 2: Interview questions

Opening the dialogue:

E.D. – Hi, I'm Elena and you will talk with me today for the Class 1 HGV Driver position. Let me know if you need a glass of water or anything.

Question 1:

E.D. – What do you believe are the top 3 qualities a professional driver should have?

Question 2:

E.D. – In your application form I see you have experience with driving. How do you stay focused while driving for prolonged periods?

Question 3:

E.D. – You describe yourself as being courteous to customers and a good communicator. Can you give an example from your previous jobs when you demonstrated this abilities?

Question 4:

E.D. – What would you do if you were falling behind on your delivery route?

Question 5:

E.D. – Tell me about your career plans. What are your short and long term goals?

Closing up the dialogue:

E.D. - Finally, I would like to know what your expectations are from us and if you have any questions related to this job.