

Module Title: Academic and Employability Skills

Module Code: BMSW4001

Student Name: Michael Abak

Student Number: 1917009

Lecturer's Name: Anita Nan

Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.	SWOT ANALYSIS.....	2
2.1	STRENGTHS.....	2
2.1.1	Communicating effectively.....	2
2.1.2	Problem solving and creativity	3
2.1.3	Critical thinking	3
2.2	WEAKNESSES	4
2.2.1	Academic writing.....	4
2.2.2	Time management.....	4
2.2.3	Team working	5
2.2.4	Leadership.....	6
3.	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	6
3.1	Academic writing	6
3.2	Time management	7
3.3	Leadership	7
4.	Conclusion.....	7
5.	References	8

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to analyse my academic and employability skills at university and at my workplace. In order to identify and carry out this analysis SWOT analysis will be employed. SWOT stands for strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Academic skills refer to skills needed at the university while employability skills relate to skills that are utilised at the workplace

2. SWOT ANALYSIS

Swot analysis is the process of identifying your strengths and weaknesses then analysing the opportunities and threats that move through or surround them (Personal SWOT Analysis: – Making the Most of Your Talents and Opportunities, 2020).

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Communicating effectively • Problem solving and creativity • Critical thinking	• Academic writing • Time management • Team working • Leadership
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Studying at the university • Better employment opportunities.	• Advanced IT knowledge

Table 1: Swot Analysis

2.1 STRENGTHS

2.1.1 Communicating effectively

Communication is the act of sharing ideas and information; it can involve body language and emotions. There are four types of communication mainly verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual. University students who communicate effectively find it easier to impress their captive audience. Employees at the workplace need to be able to communicate effectively because it affects their ability to work as a team, to impart ideas through a presentation, to carry out their duties with people from diverse backgrounds, to perform well in interviews and various negative reasons that can impact employee growth and productivity.

The skill of communicating effectively is important to the university student because they learn how to speak with as much clarity as possible, being thoughtful and considerate of the fact that the other people might find it difficult to understand their pronunciation and speaking slowly. I have this skill because I have undertaken a skills self -assessment where I obtained a favourable score in the questionnaire which focused on how I communicate with others. I scored above average positive points on the 30 statements on the questionnaire which includes not interrupting while a conversation is going on, not wanting to have the last word and 28 other questions (Morgan, 2017).

2.1.2 Problem solving and creativity

This could be defined as the skill of spotting solutions to a problem and bringing new ideas to the table in order to solve a problem especially when traditional thinking has not yielded any fruitful result. This enables us to define difficulties and analyse the evidence (Maund, Schriek and Tinkler, 2017). Employees at the workplace require this skill in order to be more productive and it involves the ability to use information to create a solution which is difficult for others to disprove. I have this skill because I apply the techniques of seeking clarity of the difficulty, determining the underlying reasons, come about with options, and deciding on a choice of action. In order to be a creative problem solver, I am aware that man is generally 'pre-set' to act in a logical and expected way of thinking but we all have the ability to be far more creative than we think we are capable of.

Employing creative problem-solving techniques like deep thinking, pondering, and reflecting on past results will assist employees in reaching better solutions to resolve a difficult situation. Workplace employees can recognise blockages linked to the expression of their creative instincts and take proactive action in order to generate a productive result (Morgan, 2017). Studies have shown that the onus to learn rests mainly with the person not the workplace, armed with this knowledge employees should always take action to learn both formally and informally because knowledge aids productive decision making (Lemmetty and Collin, 2019).

2.1.3 Critical thinking

Critical thinking skill refers to the insightful scrutiny and examination of an idea before arriving at a sensible conclusion. University students with critical thinking skills know how to develop a strong argument that is based on evidence that is reliable and which is

very difficult to disprove. I have this skill because I get my facts from reliable and dependable sources. University students who demonstrate critical thinking skills use different theories. Students should not just seek knowledge and comprehension but should seek to evaluate, create, and analyse. Abraham Maslow (1943) and his hierarchy of needs theory stated that before we arrive at the next stage in the hierarchy the lower need must be satisfied. (Morgan, 2017)

2.2 WEAKNESSES

2.2.1 Academic writing

Academic writing is a formal focussed and evidenced writing with the goal of making the reader understand the ideas being expressed in writing. Students who fail to employ academic writing methods may find themselves accused of academic dishonesty and sanctions such as not passing the course, lower marks and even dismissal might be suffered. The skill of academic writing is vital in university studies because it assist the student to express their ideas and explain in a manner that can show where the students train of thought is going or coming from. Knowledge of academic writing makes the student competent in writing essays because he/she has been exposed to the mechanics of writing essays, consciousness of grammatical errors, structuring of essays and reflective writing.

Academic writing encourages critical thinking which is necessary to convey to the reader that the student understands the subject in question and has carried out appropriate research into the subject matter extensively. Writing can benefit the university student by creating an atmosphere where the student begins to question his old way of thinking, faith, and style of doing things. (Pacello, 2018).

Furthermore, I will study how to make an argument about the issue, learn how to utilise the passive voice in place of always saying I all the time. The student to learns methods of research and how to collate statistics. Improvement of my capacity to study on my own and better organisation of my activities is part of the benefits of knowledge of academic writing. Through constant practice this could be attained in the short run.

2.2.2 Time management

Time management has been described as the capacity or skill to utilize our time productively

(Morgan, 2017). Employees and students need to know which activities consume most of their time, have a to-do list and set smart goals. Employees also need to achieve a balance in their daily activities and routines. To be able to use time efficiently, the Pareto's 80-20 rule or theory, the Eisenhower method, having a to do list and stopping procrastination are some of the theories that can be employed by employees and students to manage their time effectively. Employees need good time management skills to complete work projects with deadlines attached. Adjustment and operational capability is instilled in the culture and processes of organisations through real time management (Rydén and El Sawy, 2018).

University students and employees can improve their time management skill by applying knowledge obtained from the Pareto principle which states that twenty percent of their undertakings can account for eighty percent of the desired outcome. The principle emphasizes that they must focus on the twenty percent rather than the one hundred percent. Through the Eisenhower method, employees can create a matrix or quadrant where they will list what are important or not important. Completing this report for example will be classified as urgent because there is an approaching deadline for submission, the next in the quadrant is the second which is not urgent and with no pressure, then the third on the list which is not important but includes time pressure, then the fourth on the list which involves time wasting and escape from important things. The model suggests that employees should be on quadrant two. I will improve my time management skill by breaking the giant projects into smaller portions, beginning with the part of the project that I love and finally to keep on track of my project by getting away from things that distract me like social media.

2.2.3 Team working

Team working skill is the ability to work effectively with others or working jointly on an activity with a common goal. Workplace teams that are high performing generally are not too big, not more than seven members would be deemed effective and reasonable. The members should have skills that are different and will be of benefit to the other members of the team and this way benefit the entire team. The employees should normally be willing to make sacrifices to achieve the common reason the group was set up for. The result sought by the employees in the group should be clear and everyone should contribute their part equally to the overall attainment of the aim of the group. There should be harmony and agreement amongst team members in order to avoid conflicts and disunity which can hinder the effectiveness of the group. The employees in the group

should foster a feeling of camaraderie and closeness in order to create the necessary emotional state that groups them together for the good of the entire team.

Workplace teams that aspire to succeed should have members who do not have hidden motives or reasons for being in the team. The aim of the team should not be too broad, vague, lacking order and difficult to understand. The collective decision of the team or group should not be hijacked in another direction which can create bad blood amongst team members. I will improve my time management skill by following the steps listed earlier and avoid multitasking while setting boundaries that I must adhere to (Morgan, 2017). Employee personal empowerment is synergetically related to team working. (Bektas and Sohrabifard, 2013)

2.2.4 Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence people and to communicate effectively with them to achieve a known reason or goal. Workplace leaders should normally be inventive, innovative and have the capacity to imagine the future in a way that can inspire others. They will have the ability to sway and have effect on the character or behaviour of an individual or group. The leader shows the way the group is heading to and how to get there. Studies show that leaders push themselves to the limit and refuse to accept their current situation. They are very good in expressing their ideas to others and they find a way through a difficult obstacle and build loyalty and allegiance along the way through their actions. (Morgan, 2017)

Employees who aspire to be leaders should not step into leadership strictly because they want to be known by everybody or to be powerful. Bad leaders try to pass the buck to other people. Ineffective leaders strive to build too much emotional bond with all those who support their ideas. Leaders should achieve something or cause a change to move and inspire the followers. Effective leaders do not delve into leading just to be important. I will improve my leadership skill by being ethical, try to inspire people and increase my personal belief.

3. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

3.1 ACADEMIC WRITING

I need to improve my academic writing, and this will be done by watching educational videos, knowing when to use the active voice, practise the correct way of punctuation, not

repeating the same words, utilizing the correct vocabulary in my writing, study the argument and writing an appropriate conclusion.

3.2 TIME MANAGEMENT

I would like to improve my time management skill because I have a tendency to procrastinate things and in order to improve I will use the Eisenhower method which stresses differentiating between urgent and important things or activities and organise my activities in such a way that I am not under pressure and the situation is not urgent.

3.3 LEADERSHIP

I intend to enhance my leadership skill by being more disciplined, seek solutions to problems, showing courage and commitment, employing the use of models of leadership, and finally demonstrating consistency and reliability.

4. CONCLUSION

This report focussed on several academic and employability skills stressing their importance to the employee and to university students including some of the consequences that may arise from not having any of the skills. The skills I have and want to improve upon are also analysed. The importance of communicating effectively and expressing oneself was analysed. Problem solving. Problem solving techniques and the effect of not having this skill was also detailed. Critical thinking and the importance of thinking with clarity to help in presenting an argument was analysed. The crucial role academic writing must play in the life of a university student was analysed including the often-dire consequences of plagiarism.

Time management and the methods for improving this skill together with the Eisenhower method and Pareto's 80-20 rule was examined. Team working in the workplace and university was analysed including how to be a high performing team. The importance of good leadership and bad leadership together with models of leadership was analysed, good leaders influence their followers, without a good leader the followers would be akin to a rudderless ship lost at sea.

5. REFERENCES

- Bektas, C. and Sohrabifard, N., 2013. Terms of Organizational Psychology, Personnel Empowerment and Team Working: A Case Study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, [online] 82, pp.886-891. Available at: <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187704281301433X>> [Accessed 2 May 2020]
- Maund, A., Schriek, M. and Tinkler, P., 2017. *Certificate in Higher Education*. London: SAGE publications Ltd, p.182.
- Mindtools.com. 2020. *Personal SWOT Analysis: – Making the Most of Your Talents and Opportunities*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05_1.htm> [Accessed 17 April 2020].
- Morgan, P., 2017. *Business Student's Guide to Study and Employability*. London: SAGE publications Ltd, pp.69,77, .203-217,220-227, 243, 297-321
- Pacello, J., 2018. Cultivating a Process Approach to Writing: Student Experiences in a Developmental Course. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, [online] 19(2). Available at: <<https://web-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=47efc06e-bdb1-4c5c-a42a-169e582dac0a%40pdc-v-sessmgr01>> [Accessed 18 April 2020].
- Rydén, P. and El Sawy, O., 2018. How Managers Perceive Real-Time Management: Thinking Fast & Flow. *California Management Review*, [online] 61(2), pp.155-177. Available at: <<https://web-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=9f178e13-a68c-49af-b979-d138b06978ce%40sessionmgr4008>> [Accessed 2 May 2020].