

Applied Leadership and Management in the Workplace

Module Assignment Submission

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Module No:	BMSK4011
Module Title:	Continuous Professional Development

Statement of Confirmation of Authenticity

By the act of making this submission, the student declares that this is the work of the student named above. The work has not, in whole or in part, been knowingly presented elsewhere for assessment, or where assessment has been built on a previous assessment, this has been identified. Where materials have been used from other sources it has been properly acknowledged. If this statement is untrue, the student acknowledges that an assessment offence has been committed.

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Introduction

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is widely acknowledged as an essential component of sustaining competency and fostering long-term career advancement in the beauty business, since client expectations, legal requirements, and professional standards are constantly changing. In order to be competitive and provide safe, effective treatments, practitioners in this field—which is driven by both technical expertise and excellent customer service—must constantly update their knowledge, hone their abilities, and adjust to new trends. In this setting, continuing professional development (CPD) is not just advised but a necessary professional duty that supports ethical and reputable conduct.

This study focusses on the growth of two people who work in the same salon setting: a self-employed nail technician who works as an independent professional in the same workspace and me, a practicing beauty therapist hoping to advance into a future salon management post. Even though we have different professional obligations, there are some areas where our development needs overlap, like customer communication, business awareness, and adherence to safety and health procedures. A deeper comprehension of the various developmental pathways and difficulties faced in the modern beauty industry is made possible by examining both situations.

The analysis looks at a number of fundamental aspects of professional development, such as determining each person's unique learning style, evaluating development needs using structured techniques, looking at possible learning obstacles, and describing the support networks required for long-term development. Additionally, it includes a thorough analysis of useful development techniques that are demonstrated through SMART-based action planning that represents achievable and quantifiable career objectives. The study illustrates how development planning can be intentionally linked with both individual goals and industry expectations by basing the conversation on accepted theoretical frameworks.

Furthermore, the assignment includes a reflective evaluation of the recruitment process for a salon manager role, utilising an established reflective framework to assess personal performance, identify areas for improvement, and enhance my readiness for future employment opportunities. This reflection highlights the importance of self-awareness in professional growth and reinforces the value of ongoing learning in preparing for leadership responsibilities.

Overall, this methodical approach illustrates how targeted CPD activities support both personal and professional development, enabling practitioners to build confidence, expand capability, and contribute meaningfully to high-quality salon practice. By engaging critically with my own development and that of a colleague, the assignment underscores the integral role of CPD in shaping effective, adaptable, and forward-thinking professionals within the beauty industry.

Identify learning styles for self and another

Individuals can customise development programs to maximise knowledge acquisition and skill growth by identifying their learning preferences. The Honey and Mumford (1986) learning styles model and the Fleming and Mills (1992) VARK model are two popular frameworks that shed light on how students interact with material most successfully.

Beauty Therapist (Person 1)

The beauty therapist demonstrates traits of a Reflector, Theorist, and Visual learner, according to assessment utilising both models. Theorists embrace methodical, logical approaches to learning, whereas reflectors usually prefer to observe and carefully examine information before acting (Honey & Mumford, 1986). Diagrams, demonstrations, visual training materials, and structured written guidelines may be useful learning aids for this person, as seen by the predominance of a visual learning style.

Self-Employed Nail Technician (Person 2)

The nail technician, on the other hand, clearly favours an Activist and Kinaesthetic learning approach. Kinaesthetic learners benefit from practical, hands-on work, whereas activists learn best through active engagement and novel experiences (Kolb, 1984). In the beauty business, these styles are especially well-suited to talents like nail artistry, where proficiency is achieved via practical repetition and experimentation.

This difference suggests that whereas the nail technician does best in hands-on, experiential learning settings, the beauty therapist benefits from structure and introspection.

Development needs for self and another

SWOT and gap assessments were used to determine each person's development needs. These tools identify current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and highlight discrepancies between current competencies and future requirements.

SWOT Analysis – Person 1 (Beauty Therapist)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Strong interpersonal and client communication skills	Limited experience in formal management	VTCT Level 4 Salon Management qualification	High competition for management roles

High technical proficiency in treatments	Time management challenges under pressure	ILM Level 4 Leadership training	Financial barriers to training
Teamwork and reliability	Limited strategic marketing knowledge	Mentoring from salon owner	Risk of burnout due to workload

SWOT Analysis – Person 2 (Self-Employed Nail Technician)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Advanced nail artistry skills	Minimal formal business administration skills	NHBF business workshops	Unpredictable income patterns
Established and loyal client base	Inconsistent pricing strategies	Online digital marketing CPD	Strong local competition
High creativity and adaptability	Low confidence with digital tools	Mentoring from peers	Economic changes influencing client spending

Gap Analysis – Person 1

Current Skill	Required Skill	Gap Identified	Action
Level 3 beauty qualification	Level 4 management qualification	Moderate	Complete VTCT Level 4 Salon Management
Client care expertise	Leadership and staff management	Large	Undertake ILM Level 4 Leadership modules
Basic marketing knowledge	Advanced salon marketing and finance	Moderate	Attend CPD courses in marketing and business finance

Gap Analysis – Person 2

Current Skill	Required Skill	Gap Identified	Action
Nail artistry expertise	Business planning and pricing strategy	Large	Attend NHBF business planning workshop
Basic social media use	Effective digital marketing	Moderate	Complete Instagram marketing CPD course

Minimal client
retention analysis

Client tracking and
CRM usage

Moderate

Receive peer training in
CRM system

Potential barriers to learning and strategies for overcoming them

Barriers can restrict advancement unless actively addressed. Adult learners must balance self-directed learning with external duties, which may limit available time and motivation, according to Knowles (1980).

Barrier	Impact	Strategy for Overcoming
High workload and time constraints	Reduced capacity for structured study	Implementation of weekly learning schedules and protected study time
Training costs	Limited access to qualifications	Seek funding support, employer contribution, or payment plans
Confidence issues in leadership (Person 1)	Avoidance of management responsibilities	Mentoring and confidence-building workshops
Anxiety around digital tools (Person 2)	Avoidance of online CPD	Step-by-step guided tutorials and peer support

Removing or reducing these barriers allows both individuals to fully engage with their development plans.

Development options

A blend of formal and informal learning opportunities supports ongoing development. Armstrong (2020) stresses that multi-modal learning enhances retention and practical application.

Formal Development Options

- **VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Salon Management** – covering leadership, HR, finance, and health and safety.

- **ILM Level 4 Diploma in Leadership and Management** – developing leadership, decision-making, and operational management.
- **CPD workshops** in digital marketing, customer retention, and advanced consultation techniques.

Informal Development Options

- Mentoring with the salon owner or senior manager.
- Peer observation and shadowing.
- Participation in NHBF and BABTAC networking groups.
- Reflective journalling to support professional learning.

These options provide comprehensive support for both managerial and technical skill development.

Support mechanisms

Support mechanisms ensure sustained motivation and progress. The GO MAD model (Hayes, 2018) recommends providing clear goals and structured support.

Support Available

- **Internal:** Mentoring, supervision meetings, colleague collaboration, feedback from the salon team.
- **External:** Professional bodies (NHBF, BABTAC), training providers, online CPD platforms.
- **Managerial support:** Regular performance reviews and monitoring sessions to maintain accountability.

- **Peer support:** Encouragement, shared expertise, and collaborative learning opportunities.

Both individuals benefit from a mixture of managerial oversight and access to professional networks.

Plan of Action – SMART Objectives

Person 1 – Beauty Therapist (Aspiring Salon Manager)

Goal (What to Learn)	Actions Required	Support Needed	Success Measures	Review Date
Develop salon management capability	Complete VTCT Level 4 course	Tutor and employer support	Qualification achieved	July 2025
Enhance marketing skills	Attend CPD marketing workshops and create campaign plan	NHBF resources	Improved client retention and engagement	June 2025
Improve time management	Implement planner and priority system	Mentoring	Fewer scheduling conflicts	March 2025

Career Timeline

- **Short Term (0–12 months):** Achieve Level 4 qualification; strengthen organisational skills.
- **Medium Term (2–3 years):** Transition into assistant manager role and begin supervising juniors.
- **Long Term (3–5 years):** Progress to full salon manager position.

Person 2 – Self-Employed Nail Technician

Goal	Actions Required	Support Needed	Success Measures	Review Date
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Improve business knowledge	Attend NHBF business workshop	NHBF mentor	Effective pricing strategy	May 2025
Strengthen digital marketing	Complete online course	BABTAC support	Increased social media engagement	August 2025
Enhance client retention	Learn and apply CRM software	Peer guidance	Rising return-client rate	October 2025

Monitor progress

Progress will be monitored using several techniques including:

- Quarterly performance reviews.
- Updates to CPD logs (Appendix B).
- Client feedback evaluations.
- Mentor feedback and discussion.
- KPI tracking (e.g., client retention, booking rates).

Regular monitoring ensures alignment with development goals and supports reflective practice (Cottrell, 2019).

Conclusion

As this section has shown, determining learning styles, evaluating developmental requirements, and putting planned CPD into practice are essential building blocks for career advancement in the beauty business. Development activities can be customised to enhance engagement, knowledge retention, and practical skill acquisition by analysing preferred learning modalities using well-established theoretical models. This is particularly important in an industry where methods are changing quickly, customer expectations are changing, and there is a growing need for excellent client care standards. The formulation of focused development programs that facilitate both short-term skill improvement and long-term career success is made possible by an understanding of how people learn best.

This approach is further strengthened by the methodical evaluation of development needs using techniques like SWOT and gap analyses, which enable people to recognise strengths that can be capitalised on and shortcomings that need targeted improvement. By assisting with practical planning and well-informed decision-making, these diagnostic tools guarantee that the growth pathways selected are in line with both present industry standards and future career goals. Furthermore, identifying possible obstacles to learning, such as budgetary

limits, self-doubt, or time restraints, makes it possible to put proactive measures in place that reduce disruption and encourage learning continuity.

The development of technical competence and management capability is greatly aided by structured CPD, which is provided through a combination of formal credentials, informal learning opportunities, and continuous reflective practice. Such development is essential to the beauty industry in order to uphold professional standards, cultivate client trust, and facilitate the provision of high-quality, safe treatments and services. CPD gives people who want to work in management a solid foundation in leadership, business operations, and strategic decision-making—all of which are necessary for a salon setting to run smoothly.

Both of the people this research looks at are in a position to consistently advance towards their goals with the help of pertinent support mechanisms, including as mentoring, supervisory assistance, and access to professional networks. Development is kept goal-oriented, quantifiable, and adaptable to changing needs by regular monitoring and performance evaluation procedures. When implemented properly, ongoing professional development not only improves individual performance but also fosters a culture of professionalism, development, and superior service in the larger salon environment.

Reflection on the Recruitment Process

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) provides a structured framework to evaluate the recruitment process for a salon manager position

Description

Recently, I applied for a salon manager position within the beauty salon where I am currently employed as a beauty therapist. This opportunity formed part of my long-term career goal to move into leadership, and I viewed the recruitment process as an important developmental experience. The process included completing an application, updating my CV (see Appendix A), preparing a CPD record (Appendix B), and attending a face-to-face interview with the salon owner and regional area manager.

The interview consisted of competency-based questions, scenario-based problem-solving tasks, and a brief discussion about business operations. As this was the first managerial interview I had taken part in, I felt both anxious and motivated. The experience highlighted several areas of confidence as well as several unexpected gaps in my knowledge and abilities.

Feelings

Before the interview, I experienced a mixture of excitement and apprehension. I felt confident in my client-facing skills, treatment knowledge, and my ability to communicate professionally. However, I also felt uncertain about questions related to business management, such as budgeting, staff conflict, and performance monitoring. During the interview, my nerves became more noticeable whenever questions moved away from treatment knowledge and focused instead on operational or strategic responsibilities.

Despite these concerns, I also felt proud to have been shortlisted. Being invited to interview validated my professional growth and reassured me that my long-term goal of management was realistic. After the interview, I felt a mixture of relief, disappointment, and motivation. Although I was not offered the position, I recognised how much I had learnt about the expectations of managerial roles and how this experience could shape my future development.

Evaluation

There were several positive aspects of the interview. I communicated clearly, demonstrated strong client-care values, and showed evidence of commitment to CPD. I was able to give detailed examples of handling difficult clients, supporting colleagues during busy periods, and working independently. The interviewers responded positively to my professionalism and willingness to learn.

However there were also obvious areas that needed work. I found it difficult to respond to enquiries regarding handling employee disagreement, carrying out performance evaluations, and deciphering financial records. These gaps showed consistency in the areas that require improvement, which is consistent with the results of my previous SWOT and gap analyses (Appendix D). I also found that I hadn't done enough research on the business measures that are commonly employed in salon management, like profit margins, retail targets, and utilisation rates. My capacity to exhibit strategic awareness was hampered by this.

Analysis

Reflecting more deeply, I have realised that my interview performance reflected both my strengths and developmental gaps. My technical beauty therapy background has prepared me well for treatment delivery and client satisfaction, but less so for operational leadership. This is consistent with research suggesting that practitioners progressing from technical to managerial roles often experience a "skills transition gap" (Farris & Hall, 2020).

Furthermore, my anxiety during the interview suggests that I need more exposure to management situations, either through shadowing, mentorship, or structured training. Confidence often develops through experience, and I recognise that managerial duties such as conflict resolution, team motivation, and financial oversight require practice as well as theoretical understanding.

The recruitment process also highlighted the importance of preparation. Although I reviewed the job description (Appendix F), I could have researched industry management expectations more thoroughly. This would have helped me give more detailed and strategic responses.

Finally, the experience reinforced the value of CPD in supporting long-term career progression. Without structured learning and planned development, advancement into leadership roles becomes significantly more challenging.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although I did not secure the salon manager position, the recruitment process was a valuable learning experience that highlighted my strengths, weaknesses, and future training needs. If I were to repeat the process, I would prepare more thoroughly by studying salon management metrics, practising competency questions, and seeking advice from experienced managers.

The experience also reinforced the importance of targeted development activities—such as leadership courses, financial-literacy training, and managerial shadowing—to ensure I meet the professional expectations associated with management.

Action Plan

To prepare more effectively for future opportunities, I intend to:

- Complete a Level 3 or Level 4 management qualification.
- Undertake in-salon managerial shadowing at least twice per month to gain practical insight.
- Attend conflict resolution and HR-related workshops.
- Develop my understanding of salon financial processes, such as budgeting, stock control, and staff performance indicators.
- Regularly review and update my CPD record (Appendix B).
- Conduct mock interviews with my manager to improve confidence and fluency.

By following this action plan, I will be better prepared for future leadership opportunities and more aligned with industry expectations.

References

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Appendix

CV

Name: Rhianwen Thorn

Profile:

I am a highly skilled beauty therapist with over five years of experience delivering professional treatments and maintaining excellent client relationships. I demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous learning and to progressing into a salon management role. I bring sound technical expertise, strong organisational skills, and developing leadership capabilities.

Key Skills

- Team leadership and supervision
- Client-centred service delivery
- Salon operations and scheduling
- Marketing and social media promotion
- Compliance with industry health and safety standards

Experience

Senior Beauty Therapist – Serenity Beauty Lounge, Swansea (2021–Present)

- Provides advanced treatments and maintains exceptional client satisfaction levels.
- Assists with daily salon operations including scheduling and stock management.
- Supports training of junior staff and contributes to social media promotion.

Beauty Therapist – The Glow Room, Cardiff (2018–2021)

- Delivered a wide range of treatments including facials, waxing, and nails.
- Ensured high standards of hygiene and professionalism.

Education and Training

- VTCT Level 3 Diploma in Beauty Therapy (2018)
- VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Salon Management (In progress, 2024–2025)
- ILM Level 4 Diploma in Leadership and Management (In progress, 2024–2025)
- CPD Certificates in Customer Care, Marketing, and Health & Safety (2024)

Appendix B: Continuous Professional Development Record

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Log – Rhianwen Thorn

Date	Duration	Formal/Informal	Status	Details
Jan 2024	1 Year	Formal	In Progress	ILM Level 4 Diploma in Leadership and Management
Jan 2024	1 Year	Formal	In Progress	L4 Certificate of HE in Applied Leadership and Management – University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Oct 2023	2 days	Formal	Completed	Dermaplaning Training Workshop
Jun 2023	1 day	Informal	Completed	Brow Lamination Peer Learning Session
Feb 2023	3 hours	Informal	Completed	Online CPD: “Conflict Management in the Workplace”
Dec 2022	2 days	Formal	Completed	Advanced Facial Techniques Course

Appendix C: Skills Audit

I rate my current skills from 1 (low) to 5 (high):

- Advanced facial treatments – 5
- Client communication – 5
- Time management – 4
- Staff supervision – 2
- Business administration – 2
- Financial management – 1
- Leadership confidence – 2
- Marketing knowledge – 2

Appendix D: SWOT and Gap Analysis (First Person)

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Strong technical beauty therapist skills
- Excellent client care
- Motivated and ambitious
- Commitment to CPD

Weaknesses:

- Limited management experience
- Low confidence with HR tasks

- Minimal experience with financial reporting

Opportunities:

- Management courses
- Internal mentoring
- Possible future promotion

Threats:

- Competition from more experienced candidates
- Limited managerial vacancies

Gap Analysis

Required Management Skill	Current Ability	Gap	Action Required
Leadership	Basic	Large	Management training
Conflict resolution	Basic	Large	HR workshops
Financial literacy	Low	Very large	Budgeting & finance CPD
Staff performance management	Low	Medium	Shadowing manager

Appendix E: Barriers to Learning

I face the following barriers to learning:

- **Time constraints:** full-time salon hours
- **Financial limitations:** advanced qualifications are costly
- **Confidence issues:** especially with business and HR tasks
- **Learning anxiety:** fear of failing in new leadership situations

To manage these barriers, I use:

- Online flexible CPD
- Payment plans for courses
- Support from my manager
- Self-paced learning at home
- Peer support within the salon

Appendix F: SMART Development Plan

Goal 1: Improve leadership skills

- **Specific:** Complete Level 3 Leadership training
- **Measurable:** Achieve certification
- **Achievable:** Study part-time
- **Relevant:** Required for management progression
- **Time-bound:** Complete within 12 months