



Employability Skills
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Development
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Career development is a lifelong, continuous process that involves managing learning and leisure time to help guide myself towards a desired future. Modern professional development emphasises personal growth and continuous change, with individual reflection playing a crucial role in helping me understand my strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations, guiding me more effectively towards a career path that suits me. Through personal reflection, I have learnt to better evaluate my past experiences and gain a deeper understanding of what can fulfil me from both a professional and personal point of view, which is essential in an ever-changing job market (Schoormann, Stadtländer, Knackstedt, 2023). I have come to believe that personal reflection is essential for better assessing skills, understanding interests and values, discovering what type of work suits you or should be avoided in the future (Yates, 2020). Throughout this essay, I will elaborate in detail on my reflection upon my professional career using various tools that I have studied during the Professional Career Development module, such as **SWOT** analysis, **RIASEC** personality types, **SMART** objectives, the Johari Window, and Honey and Mumford's learning styles. These tools collectively help in structuring my journey, offering methodologies not only for self-assessment but also for setting and achieving career objectives.

By using these tools, I am able to construct a roadmap that supports both immediate objectives and long-term ambitions. This strategic approach ensures that I remain aligned with my core values and interests, leading to a more fulfilling career path. Additionally, engaging with these evaluative processes offers me a comprehensive view of my professional journey, ensuring I maintain a balance between personal satisfaction and career success. As the workforce evolves, so too must my strategies, and these tools serve as valuable resources to navigate such changes effectively (Mahapatra, 2021).

SWOT analysis is a structured method often used to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Reflecting on personal strengths might involve acknowledging innate talents, specialised skills, or unique experiences that set an individual apart in their professional field. Recognising weaknesses, possibly through past feedback or self-observation, plays a vital role in understanding areas requiring improvement or additional preparation.

Through **SWOT** analysis, I discovered how to honestly evaluate and leverage my strengths and weaknesses. For example, in my professional past, I have held jobs in the commercial, hospitality, and even financial sectors. Of the three, I found myself most fulfilled in the hospitality sector because the daily activities involved many practical skills as well as organisational skills that I believe suit me, as I have confirmed through Holland's career theory test. In this field, I faced different challenges every day that motivated me and helped me maintain enthusiasm and a desire to advance to a leadership position, which I did, reaching the position of head waiter and later resort supervisor. I cannot say the same about the advisory job I had in the financial sector, where, despite having excellent communication abilities and the desire to work with people and potential clients, I encountered difficulties in maintaining the job for a longer period due to the repetitive nature of daily activities, which offered no challenge. This led me to the conclusion at that time that I was not proficient in that field, without understanding the cause of my dissatisfaction. Upon beginning this course, I managed to identify my professional strengths and weaknesses, an essential step towards my personal development (Rumsey, 2020).

Understanding the **RIASEC** profile, based on Holland's theory of career choice, offered profound insights into how careers can align with individual interests and personality types. It helped me discover careers that not only match my skills but also align with my personal interests and values, thus enhancing my work satisfaction and career longevity. This alignment is crucial because when work aligns with personal values, it drives motivation and productivity, making career paths more sustainable (Sheldon, et al. 2020).

The professional course is helping me improve my employability skills by reviewing past achievements and challenges. I strategically planned my **SMART** objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), which are crucial for turning general aspirations into actionable plans. Through reflective practices, I can assess past achievements and challenges, setting realistic and clear goals for future career actions. One of my objectives is to complete the first year of university; during this time, I want to improve my communication skills in English, both written and verbal. I have set a goal to attend all classes and attempt to overcome every challenge that arises along the way. On completion of this journey, I will hopefully discover my vocation, opening new professional opportunities, with the final goal being to achieve all this during this academic year.

By setting **SMART** objectives, I ensure that each step I take is purposeful and aligned with my broader career goals. This process reinforces my commitment to growth and helps track progress systematically, acting as a guide to navigate the complexities of the modern job market and reach my full potential.

The **Johari Window** is a psychological tool used to enhance self-awareness and improve interpersonal relationships. It is divided into four quadrants: the Open Area, Blind Area, Hidden Area, and Unknown Area. Each area represents different aspects of our self-perception and how others perceive us. The Open Area consists of traits known to both self and others, while the Blind Area represents those traits that others see but we are unaware of. The Hidden Area contains personal knowledge that we keep from others, and the Unknown Area involves aspects undiscovered by both ourselves and others.

Engaging with the **Johari Window** evaluation has helped me realise the importance of soliciting feedback from professional peers. By actively seeking and accepting feedback, even when it is negative, I can enhance my blind area, thereby reducing misunderstandings and strengthening my professional relationships (Tovey, & Skolits, 2022). In this way, feedback becomes a valuable learning tool, providing insights that can be instrumental in expanding my Open Area. This expansion not only fosters better communication and collaboration with colleagues but also broadens my career horizons by enhancing my self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

In addition to the **Johari Window**, the **Honey and Mumford** learning style method has been instrumental in understanding how I learn best. This framework identifies four types of learners: Activists, who learn by doing; Reflectors, who learn by observing and thinking about what happened; Theorists, who learn by understanding the theory behind the actions; and Pragmatists, who learn by trying out ideas to see if they work (Mahapatra, Dansana, 2021). Discovering that I am a Pragmatist means I thrive through practical methods and experimentation.

By incorporating my learning style into my career planning, I can focus on roles and opportunities that offer hands-on experiences, allowing for the practical application of theories and skills. This approach not only caters to my personal strengths but also ensures that I remain engaged and motivated in my work, fostering continuous personal and professional development (Cottrell, 2021). Ultimately, understanding both myself and how I engage with the world facilitates a more targeted and fulfilling career path.

As part of my **action plan**, I will systematically evaluate my key strengths, such as technical skills or interpersonal qualities, by conducting a thorough self-assessment complemented by constructive feedback from colleagues and lecturers. Engaging in this dual approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of my capabilities. At the same time, I will leverage self-reflection and critical thinking to analyse my weaknesses. This introspective approach promotes personal growth by identifying areas that require improvement, allowing for targeted efforts in skill-building and professional development (Cottrell, 2023).

In addition, I will diligently explore future opportunities that align with my strengths and personal interests. This involves keeping abreast of the educational programmes and resources offered by the university, which could enhance my current skill set and open new avenues for success (McMillan, 2021). Evaluating these opportunities requires alignment with my long-term career goals and an understanding of how they fit into broader industry trends and demands.

Moreover, I will adopt a proactive approach to recognising potential threats, such as rapid technological advancements or economic fluctuations. By anticipating these challenges, I can develop strategies to mitigate their impact, ensuring continued relevance and adaptability in the ever-evolving professional landscape.

In **conclusion**, by implementing and regularly updating this action plan, I will ensure continuous personal and professional growth. Consistent review and adaptation of the plan will be crucial in responding to both personal evolution and changing external conditions. By committing wholeheartedly to this strategic plan, I am positioning myself for sustained progress towards achieving a fulfilling and impactful career. This structured, flexible approach will not only facilitate professional advancement but also contribute to ongoing personal development and satisfaction.

Reference list: