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BMSK4005:
Professional career development

Portfolio of evidence

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1 Introduction and overview

The portfolio is divided into four major sections that address the learning that has taken place during the course of studies in this academic year 17/18. Sections 2-5 demonstrate an understanding of:

Section 2: Skills and knowledge which contribute toward working effectively

This section highlights numerous in class work undertaken to highlight how working in but also working as a team is important in securing how well the task is fulfilled and what is learnt but an individual in the exercise.

Section 3: Readiness for employment

Obtaining relevant qualification, learning new skills and developing on already existing knowledge is shown in the material presented during lectures. Writing exercises and discussions in class were used to work through problems and showed how the same can be applied to working environments.

Finding your own solutions and working through the problem-solving processes. Throughout all the set assignments when the task is set, the problem had to be broken down into more understandable sections to clarify the goal of the work set.

Section 4: Personal strengths and areas for further development

Reflection moments where personal questions were asked regarding what had gone wrong or what had been fulfilled to assist with developing a way of improving or handling the situation if it was presented another time. Developing reasons for why things didn't work, what had been tried.

What solution had been developed and applying them to another problem.

Section 5: Establishing employment goals and developing a personal action plan/development plan

Learning from across all the modules undertaken as well as the experiences during the year of study is shown in the document.

2 Skills and knowledge which contribute toward working effectively

2.1 Communication

One of the most important skills I have gained is learning how to communicate effectively in order to accomplish a common goal. Being able to describe an issue or an idea I had to other team members is crucial in a team environment. Everyone in the team must be able to voice their ideas and everyone needs to be heard since every idea should be valid and taken into consideration.

I managed to greatly improve my communication skills both written and oral, by being put into several groups and given a common goal or task. This allowed me to get more experience of working together and communicating my thoughts more clearly to my team mates. I believe this will greatly help me in the future in and outside of employment.

2.2 Presentation

Presenting your ideas in front of coworkers is also a valuable skill to have in a working environment. One needs to be able to capture the attention of your audience but also maintain it for the duration of the presentation. It's important to keep the presentation interesting through the use of out of the ordinary facts and even humor if it seems appropriate.

The speaker needs to make sure that every single person in the room can hear him and also speak clearly to make yourself easily understood by the audience. Planning the structure and content of your presentation is very important in order for your audience to absorb the information and it needs to be delivered in an easy-to-follow format. I achieved these skills through the various in-class presentations.

2.3 Management

I have learned a number of skills that have improved my overall managing abilities, both personal and team related. I have learnt to plan my work out before undertaking a large task, usually by breaking it up into smaller and easier to achieve tasks which also allowed me to be better organized.

in my work. The course has also helped me with my logical thinking and coordination with others through the various teams I was put in.

2.3 Time management

I have learned the true importance of time management when working towards tight deadlines and trying to balance my family life with work life. The tasks had to be properly planned and I needed a clear way of executing them. Note taking was also an important way for me to track everything and remember what I needed to do in order to achieve my goals.

My problem solving skills under pressure also improved due to the deadlines and allowed me to be more confident when taking on larger tasks. I believe this will help me greatly both in work environments and in my personal life. Time keeping and tracking are valuable skills that I will use constantly going forward.

2.4 Customer awareness

Being aware of your customer's needs and wants is vital when trying to market or sell products or ideas to them. One needs to know what type of customers the company is going after and who they are targeting their products towards in order to improve the business or even make a sale. These are all skills we studied and learnt about during my time in the course. I believe I now have a better grasp on how companies market products and how important knowing your target customer can be.

2.5 Job setting

One of the most interesting topics we discussed were the various different job settings we looked at and the challenges facing the people in those industries. This allowed me to get a better understanding of how all the skills we have learned would help us in different working environments.

2.6 Leadership

I managed to improve my leadership skills by being in leadership-like positions throughout the year and also by observing what others did as leaders. I learned what works and what doesn't when put in these positions.

A leader has to be able to take all of the skills outlined so far and make them all work together. He/she has to be able to motivate and also coordinate everyone in the team in order to get the most out of everyone. They have to be able to give specific tasks to people where they will succeed and even make them go outside of their comfort zone in order to improve themselves. They have to be mentors, managers and coordinators for the entire team.

Relevant modules:

- Effective team working and communication
- Managing enterprise in the 21st century

3 Readiness for employment

Developing my key skills was an important step towards becoming ready for employment. Attributes such as communication and analytical skills are the first things potential employers will be looking at. From the moment, I get in touch with them, the employer will judge me on these very skills,

especially on my ability to describe myself and my experience. I have learned that making a good first impression is crucial when entering the job market.

Decision making and problem solving is another skill that is high in demand. The ability to identify complex problems and review related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions, can help put me ahead of my competition when it comes to job interviews. The ability to use critical thinking to rationalize a decision might be the thing that sets me apart from the rest.

The ability to stick to assigned schedules and can provide pieces of information with ease and speed indicates that I can stay on top of things and always be expected to deliver the required task or information. Similarly, knowing which tasks to prioritize and which ones to leave for later is an important skill to have in a working environment.

Public speaking and self-confidence are two skills that I have put a lot of effort in improving in order to one day put them to test in a working environment. If you do not believe in yourself, your skills and abilities, then you cannot expect anyone else to believe in you. I have learnt to always be confident in myself and ensure that everyone sees me as someone that has the ability to pull through whatever situation comes my way.

I have learnt the importance of having a solid problem solving process where defining the problem, evaluating already tried solutions and searching for new ones, implementing and monitoring one of the solutions. This will give me a head start when tackling new problems in the work space.

I will be able to finally put to test all of the skills I have learned in this course both in interview settings and in a working environment. The qualifications will allow me to prove my capacity to learn and work despite my age and my illness and the soft skills learnt will allow me to truly put myself out there in search of employment.

Relevant modules studied:

- Academic and employability skills
- Digital skills and research methods
- Problem solving and decisions making

4 Understanding of personal strengths and areas for further development

It is evident that taught material has been examined in the written reports, presentations, in class exercises that assist with learning taught material. Further to these exercises, evidence of growth in knowledge, understanding include and have been instructed to center on being able to critically and constructively be able to critic and appraise your own work and efforts.

Looking back at group presentations and other tasks, a workshop on SWOT analysis can be used to understand your strength and weaknesses, in addition to realizing the opportunities and the threats that you can face. It is not only a self-monitoring tool but can be used to assess the environment you care placed in and help identify threats and opportunities that you may not be aware of.

In terms of working for yourself, it can also be used to identify your competitors, in turn you can develop a strategy to help set you apart from the field.

At the start of the exercises there have been many things that I felt I would and have struggled with, detailing these and working through the problem and the opportunities that resolving or deciding to work on the problem, has somehow eliminated the threat. A SWOT analysis has been shown below.

Table 1: SWOT analysis to help assist with professional development

Strengths - Working as a team member - Working to task - Microsoft Word - Searching for details (internet) - Confidence - Self motivation	Weaknesses - Committing to a task/ venture - Asking questions
Opportunities - Contributing to the team - Writing reports - Presenting - Going to class (learning with other people)	Threats - Miscommunication - Carrying out the wrong task

Self-awareness: what introduced to get to know yourself, it highlighted the different learning styles. It highlighted the I enjoyed working in a group. Something that I had little experience with previously, but have been given the opportunity to take part in. Individual written task also helped show that I have the competency of working both as a group and as an individual to complete tasks.

Relevant modules:

- Professional career development

5 Establishing employment goals and developing a personal action plan/development plan.

Goals, needs and action plan are needed to develop a personal action plan. To determine my needs and goals it was essential to explore the options that's are out there, and the process needed to acquire what I wanted and what rules and protection is in place for an employee. My competencies in developing an action/ development plan are discussed below.

5.1 Exploring employment options

To first step of developing a career plan was to identify what personal career plan I have for myself. Obtaining the qualification of Skills in the workplace helps obtain information and obtain skills that are needed to work through my options. A list of things I wanted to learn and things that could be gained from this qualification helped formulate the start of my development planning. This was an insightful exercise as it took into consideration my age, qualifications and ability to work in some situations. I was made aware of not all jobs were open to my needs, but also my qualification gap.

The development stage was an endeavor of learning new things, new ways of approaching situation and making sure that I was constantly exposing myself to learning new things.

Developing an action plan was made easy by now knowing what tools I can use to highlight my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, so nothing goes a miss. Going back on previous

searching often will help me see if the jobs researched can be changed to reflect current changes. This would allow me to also make adjustments and changes to the plan.

5.2 The recruitment and selection process

Companies have various different recruitment and selection processes and what key skills they choose to focus on when picking candidates is usually dependent on company values and the team environment of the specific branch. Being able to fit in with the existing team mentality is just as vital as conventional skills such as communication and problem solving.

Every applicant should model their CV and cover letter after the description in order to match the needs of the company (Torrington, 2014). It shows that you have put effort and thought into the application and have not simply sent a generic application to every company in the area. Making the application personal by adding the name of the HR employee overseeing the process or the branch manager can help take your application further.

Jobs usually have minimum requirements that need to be met but companies are often looking for people that stand out in their own ways too. I have learnt that it never hurts to talk about what passionate me, especially if it's related to the position at hand. This shows I am not just another applicant but that I am an individual with needs and desires willing to work and improve myself.

I have learnt most of the above from the managing conduct in the workplace case study. It allowed me to get a better understanding of the entire process and what it is like to work in some of these environments. I have a better grasp on what it is like to be on the other side of the recruitment process and I think I know what they might be looking for in the future. This will allow me to make myself a better candidate and improve my chances of landing a job.

5.3 The rules and legislations within a workplace

The rules and legislations within a workplace are set to protect those working in those areas. These rules reflect the dangers that can be posed for example in a food environment as contamination was a crucial detail throughout my research for the report on "applying recognized problem solving to a work-based situation", which in this example was for a packaged food production organization. These rules can also reflect the number of people working in the areas, appropriate closing to wear and the health and safety rules that must be followed.

Individual rights and responsibilities are also detailed in the rules and legislations within a workplace so as to understand what is expected of you and what you can expect from your employer and working environment. This gives more reassurance of the environment you can expect to work in, your conduct and expectations. Workplace rules also give an employee the confidence to carry out work knowing that it is according to the right procedures (Introduction to organization behavior, Laurie J. Mullins)

Every employee needs to be fully aware of health and safety regulations both set by the government and the employer. We all need to be able to make relevant risk assessments and be able to quickly and surely act on identified risks so they can be reduced and maintained as soon as possible. Companies need competent people overseeing health and safety in the workplace and also keeping the policies up to date according to laws put in place and past experiences relevant to the environment.

Relevant modules:

- Problem solving and decisions making
- Professional career development

6 Conclusion and Reflection

This portfolio will become part of my learning journey and will be an expanding and adjustable document highlighting and promoting self-analysis and critical reflection. It will help consolidate all work done in preparation for developing skills, to help understand the complexities of the working environment as well as self-growth.

Self-reflection during class was a way of showing what we have learnt and also gave us a sense of achievement towards fulfilling the learnt objectives. These experiences helped consolidate understanding and working through questions effectively and ask questions. Everything I was taught will help me in my next steps towards employment and reaching my goals.

Everything we have learnt has given me a better understanding of what is needed in the current work environment and what aspects of myself I need to work on in order to compete with today's workforce. I have a better grasp of IT and software used (such as Microsoft Word and Powerpoint) and I can't wait to put these to the test if given the opportunity.

I still believe there is a great deal more I can learn and a lot of areas I can improve on in order to achieve the goals I have set for myself. I have enjoyed a large number of the activities on this course and a had fun tackling some of the problems I came across. I have learnt how much I enjoy working with others and have improved the way I tackle challenges and problems on a day-to-day basis.

References

Management and organisational behavior, **Laurie J. Mullins, 11th ed. Harlow : Pearson 2016**

Torrington, D. (2014). Human Resource Management. Place of publication not identified Pearson Education Limited.