

# Professional Career Development

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## **Introduction**

For my reflective essay I will discuss about my professional development. The report will include elements related to the employment framework in order to provide understanding of the processes of recruitment and employers expectations. In my report I will make use of theories in order to support the frames and tools applied.

My name is Cristina and I am currently working for my family business, a coffee shop but I want to change career paths and start working in healthcare. Towards that I am studying at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

## **Reflection**

My reflection on the role play experience is realized using Gibbs Reflective Cycle and assess my thoughts and learning on the experience. A copy of the role play can be found in Appendix. Gibbs theory of reflection gives a framework for reflections that enhances the cyclic characteristics to repeated experiences and how to learn and plan to improve. It is organised in six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan (Gibbs, 1988).

*The description stage* describes what happened, where it happened, involved parties, what was you input, what was the input of other persons, what was the outcome, what was the intended outcome, the reason of being there.

My role play experience was the first task for Professional Career Development module and its aim was to create a practical professional development exercise for the students. In a group of two students, I was the person interview for a restaurant manager job. I was asked by my colleague about my skills and experience. I was also asked why do I want to work in healthcare and what will be my contribution.

*The feelings stage* is about the personal thoughts on the experience. It is an exploration of the feelings occurred during the experience and the effect on the experience. It also explores the feelings before and after the experience. It takes into account what were the thoughts during the experience and after it. The experience of the role play put a little bit of pressure on me as I did not participate to an interview in a long time. I was nervous and I was focused to do well at an exam of such type. Despite

that it was only a role play it felt like a real life situation and I was determined to do my best. I answered all the questions using my best abilities to highlight my skills set and my experience. I felt nervous because of the type of the exercise being requested to talk about ourselves, but also because I knew I was being marked as part of my assignment.

*The evaluation stage* assess the good and bad aspects of the experience. This involves the evaluation of what went wrong, what went well and it has to be realised from an objective point of view. The work itself, it was time consuming as I had to rewrite my questions for my colleague in order to be formulated clearly and that was a negative aspect as I did not allocate extra time for this and I struggled with going to work and write my assignments. The positive aspects of the experience is that it pushed me out of my comfort zone and improved my public speaking.

*The Analysis stage* gives sense to the experience and the reflector can give a meaning to the whole situation. The reflector could identify why some things happened a certain way, well or wrong.

The role play experience was good because I put effort into it, I made practised before with my colleague. I find that practising helped me and contributed positively to the experience. Despite that I consider there is still place for improvement towards my communication skills and to gain more confidence. The feedback from the lecturer was positive and that created confidence in my approach as an interviewer and when we switched places as an interviewee.

*The Conclusion stage* is one of the final stages where what was learned and how he would have act it differently is thought of. In conclusion I believe this experience of the role play improved my understanding for how to address role play tasks, it gave me the confidence to attend a real interview, it developed my knowledge on the current employment needs and my career development. The skills that I need to develop further are written and oral communication.

*The action plan stage* is the last stage and it has to be identified the way it is intended to be dealt with future similar experiences.

If I have to do a role play again for my assessment I will allocate more research time as I should be very prepared. In order to improve my communication skills in an interview I will make use of devices to record myself and see exactly what is the image I want to promote, to be more confident candidate.

### **Current requirements from employers**

According to Indeed (2021) employers are looking for qualities such as hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are the skills obtain from education, training more technical skills and soft skills are obtained by the individual in his interaction within a team and it represents more the personal traits. Traits such as ambition, dependability, discipline, creativity, perseverance, compassion, loyalty, patience, resilience, courage, honesty, modesty, integrity, flexible, confidence are valuable for the employers. The employers want an employee that is eager to learn, has work ethic, has problem

solving skills and communication skills. Teamwork is another request as many organisations require it. A confident candidate will impress the employer so preparing prior interview will help the individual.

For an interview I would get prepared and read about the activity of the organisation. I would reflect on my skills and how do I want to present myself. I have proved in my previous work experiences that I am a determined and ambitious employee that is able to solve problems, to have a good work ethic and to work in a team. I am honest and I always address tasks positively and willing to go the extra mile to complete tasks and projects.

### **Self-motivation**

Self-motivation is defined as the “the quality of being capable of hard work and effort without the need for pressure from others” (Oxford Dictionary, 2021). In other words is the level of effort put by the individual into self-development. Self motivation is intrinsic and depends from person to person how much they really want to achieve something. Sometimes it can be driven by extrinsic motivational factors like desire to advance professionally or to obtain monetary rewards or other fulfilling drives. There are different factors to be taken into account for achieving high levels of self-motivation: self-confidence, self-efficacy, positive thinking, strong goals, stimulating environment (Positive Psychology, 2021).

In order to improve my self-motivation I need to look at self-assurance and set challenging goals for myself such as developing a new career. In order to increase self-efficacy, I am acting proactively, I am doing this course to obtain a diploma, but also to get knowledge. This is empowering me to be self-confident and believe in my abilities. Positive thinking is in connection with the “can do attitude”. Having a strong goal to develop new skills relates to personal achievements and desire to start a new career. Positive thinking helps me overcome obstacles and challenging situations. Focus and strong goals gives me the direction I want to have. By applying Locke’s theory regarding the goal setting I can verify my goals. It is a clear goal, measurable and specific: after I finish my course I want to find a job in healthcare. It is a challenging goal because of the pandemic and actual economic risks and the low job offer. The commitment characteristic of my goal shows that is relevant and attainable and it helps my major objective to advance and work as a manager. Regularity of Feedback is realised by monitoring my progress towards my goal to ensure I am on the right path, graduating, getting a job in healthcare. Sufficient respect for complexity relates to the complexity of the goal. I consider that with the my high levels of determination and studying at the University make this achievable.

### **Learning styles**

There are three main learning styles (VAK): visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The Visual learning style is when the learner absorbs the knowledge by seeing or visualising mentally. Usually this types

of learners benefit of written information, images, graphs and charts. The auditory learning style is when the learner absorbs the knowledge by hearing it. This type of learners benefit of oral instructions, recorded lessons. The kinaesthetic learning style involves learning through doing and being involved in the process, hands on, benefit of practical parts of the experiences (Engage Education,

I am a visual learner and that helps me at work as when we have training based on power point presentations it helps me to absorb the knowledge by seeing it. Also it helps me when we receive written emails with instructions as I find it very clear and easier to follow rather than listening to someone speaking.

### **Personal development**

I am using Johari window to help me understand personal development and to increase self awareness. This tool of analysis has four sections Open area, Blind area, Hidden area and Unknown area (Bourner, 2011). Open area cumulates the information about myself that I want to share. I am hard working and organised, I do not like to procrastinate and I aim to act proactively. I am a friendly person and I can easily adapt to different working environments and integrate in any teams. I find it easy to adapt to different situations and identify and act fast when problems arise. The blind area cumulates the aspects that I do not know about myself, but other could have become aware from my way of interaction within the team or my way of solving a certain problem. The Hidden area cumulates the aspects that I know about myself but do not want to share with others. This information refers to details on my family life. I am a private person and I want to keep my personal views to myself. Also I do not want others to take advantage of that or interfere with my family life. The unknown area are the aspects about myself that I or the others, do not know about them as I did not have a chance to verify or experience. For example I do not know if I would be a good manager as I never work in a position with full responsibilities.

SWOT analysis is another tool of analysis that I am using it to increase self awareness.

*Strengths:* my strengths are adaptability, team player, organised, able to do multitasking.

*Weaknesses:* IT knowledge, I can be too compulsive at times to do things perfectly, lack of experience in managing people, time management, poor experience in reporting.

*Opportunities:* University diploma, getting new knowledge and learning new skills.

*Threats:* Competition, many persons oriented to healthcare career with the current pandemic, recession caused by pandemic, internal promotion within healthcare centres.

### **Career plans and employment goals**

My career plans are in connection to the Healthcare sector. I want to start working in this sector and advance in the management level. At the moment I am involved in the management of the family business and I intend to contribute to the success to the business, but my focus will be in connection with the new chosen career. I aim to graduate the health care course I am doing at the moment and be able to undertake entry jobs in healthcare centres and hospitals and progress in my career. I aim to continue my training and development in health care and access management jobs within 5 years.

### **Action plan**

The role of the action plan is to overcome weaknesses and reduce the skills gap in order to progress towards my employment goals.

Personal and development plan

| <b>Skills</b>     | <b>Method of achievement</b>                                    | <b>Obstacles</b>                                   | <b>Completion</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| IT skills         | Undertake an course online                                      | Health problems                                    | 6 months          |
| Reporting         | Participating at the classes within my course at the University | Extra shifts at the current job<br>Health problems | 3 months          |
| Leadership skills | Undertaking more managerial responsibilities                    | Losing my job<br>Health problems                   | 6 months          |

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion this reflection helped me to increase my self awareness, to acknowledge my strengths, but also to identify ways to improve my weaknesses and take advantage of the opportunities. It made me aware of my skill set and what do I need to improve. It determined me to create an action plan that will help my personal development.

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## **Appendix**

### **Role play questions**

Interviewer- Hello How are you doing today?What is your name?

Maria- Hello. I am fine thank you. My name is Maria. Nice to meet you.

Interviewer- I am your interviewer today. Let's start your interview

Maria- Yes I am very excited for this opportunity.

### **Can you describe yourself in a few words?**

Maria- I am an active and hard working person with strong family values. I am ambitious and I believe in lifelong learning and continuous personal development. That is why I am currently studying a three year course at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I am a very organised individual who likes getting things done and act proactively. I am a friendly person and I can easily adapt to different working environments and integrate in any teams. I find it easy to adapt to different situations and identify and act fast when problems arise.

### **Why do you want to work in this industry?**

Maria- I always looked after the people around me, my friends and family seeing in me a maternal figure and a carer. I am a people person and I had similar jobs in the past. I find it very rewarding to care for people and improve positively and provide value to someone else's life. The job can have a certain level of flexibility and adapt to the patient needs rather than following a strict routine.

### **How would you deal with a difficult patient?**

Maria- It is important to be calm and listen to what they are saying by asking open-ended questions. I will try to reassure them at all times and acknowledge their grievances. I will provide them with an opportunity to explain what issues they have in order to address it. It is important to maintain eye contact, but not prolonged.

### **How do you think you can contribute to this job?**

Maria- My work experience in health care provided me a great set of skills, attention to detail, ability to create and implement a routine, ability to deal and to answer the needs to any type of patient, adherence to professional standards. I also have experience in assisting medical staff and using specific equipment. My confidence in acting promptly and using my set of skills and knowledge will be an asset for the company.

### **What are your career goals?**

Maria- I aim to graduate the health care course I am doing currently and be able to undertake entry jobs in healthcare centres and hospitals and progress in my career.

I aim to continue my training and development in health care and access management jobs within 5 years.

Interviewer- Do you have any questions for me?

Maria- Yes. I would like to know if I were hired for the position, would I be going through any training prior to actually starting the work?

Interviewer- Yes. The organisation practices one week training on the job with a senior staff.

Maria- Yes. What are the next steps in the job process?

Interviewer- We will let you know if you got the position through an email, that should not be more than three days. Thank you for coming today.

Maria- Thank you. Have a nice day.