

Personal Development Plan

Creating a personal development plan

You have assessed and analysed your skills/knowledge and abilities using a range of assessment methods and as such you would have identified any gaps in your skills knowledge and abilities in the context of you future employment aspirations.

Having identified gaps based on your analysis you are now able to create a “Personal Development Plan” for yourself. Like all such action plans, this is designed to help you bring about change, and to improve your readiness for your chosen career path.

The tables below will help you to go through three steps to arrive at such a plan:

- Step 1** - The requirements of your current and/or future role
- Step 2** - Identify your strengths and development areas
- Step 3** - Build up a SMART action plan to bring about change and development

Step 1 - The requirements of my role

Start by thinking about your role and the different elements of your job. Depending on your situation, you may wish to concentrate on your current role or perhaps on a future anticipated role if this seems more relevant. For example:

- What are the key relationships that will be important for success in this role?
- What will be the key tasks that you will be performing?
- What additional knowledge and understanding will you need?
- With whom, and how will you mostly be communicating?
- How clearly will your goals be defined?
- What personal pressures will this role impose on you?

In the light of your answers to these questions complete the table below:

To fulfil the requirements of my role I need to:

1.
2.
3.

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Step 1 - The requirements of my role

Reflect on the current and/or future activities that you identified in Step 1, and consider them in the light of the insights gained on the course so far. Hopefully, this will have made you more aware of strengths that you may raise to the level of conscious strategies in certain settings. It will also have highlighted some areas of development that you may need to focus on to be as effective as possible in your chosen environment.

Identify three areas of strength and how you might consciously use them more to your advantage in the future:

Area of Strength	Ways to use it more extensively
1.	
2.	
3.	

Now identify three areas for development and how you might consciously address them in the future:

Area for development	Ways to address it
1.	
2.	
3.	

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Step 3 - A SMART Action Plan

Working with the areas you have selected in Step 2, identify the specific actions you are going to take to bring about change and development for yourself. The plan you make should be a SMART plan, i.e.

1 Specific

Is your goal well-defined? Avoid setting unclear or vague objectives; instead be as precise as possible.

Instead of: "To listen more"

Make it specific: "To use the next meeting of the Marketing Managers as an opportunity to practice listening behaviours and to reinforce this by writing a detailed minute of the meeting"

2 Measurable

Be clear how you will recognise when you have achieved your goal. Using numbers, dates and times is one way to represent clear objectives.

Instead of: "To find out about South Africa"

Make it measurable: "To use the internet and the local library to identify and read key references and make notes on the history, economy, and politics of South Africa. This to be completed by the end of next month."

3 Attainable

Setting yourself unrealistic goals will only end in disappointment. Make your goals challenging, but attainable.

Instead of: "Learn German by Christmas"

Make it attainable: "Register with a language school and attend classes to learn German on a weekly basis for the next 12 months. Then review progress and set new goals"

4 Relevant

Ensure that any development actions that you plan are directly relevant to the context that you are currently, or will be, operating in. Test them for relevance against the answers you gave in Step 1 above.

5 Time-bound

Set a time scale for completion of each goal. Even if you have to review this as you progress, it will help to keep you motivated.

Now use the table on the following page to finalise an action plan in three areas.

Personal Development Plan

Development objective	Specific actions	Blockers and how they will be removed	Support required	How I will know when I have achieved the objective
1.				
2.				
3.				

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