

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

MODULE: BMSK4001

STUDENT ID: 1806519

LECTURER: PETER ALLEN

27th April 2019

CONTENTS

1. Title Page
2. Contents
3. Introduction
4. Reflecting on Employability Skills
 - 4.1 Communication skills
 - 4.2 Team-working
 - 4.3 Presenting Skills
 - 4.4 Academic writing
 - 4.5 Problem Solving
5. Skills I need to improve
 - 5.1 Leading Others
6. Conclusion
7. References

Introduction

In this report I will be discussing what I learnt in this module and how it has helped me improve my employability skills. The purpose will be to present and analyze areas in which I have improved and areas that I will improve in future. My aim is to reflect on these skills so I can have a clear understanding what can negatively affect my performance as an employee. In these findings I hope to be able to teach others how to reflect and improve on their employability skills.

Reflecting on Employability Skills

Communication Skills

This must be the most useful and the most common skill that I have used. In this module I learnt that this skill can be applied in many ways, verbally, physically or even using body gestures. These findings have made me apply this skill into my business effectively. Although I have always been a good communicator (so I thought) I came across a few problems for my lack of understanding on how to communicate effectively. I have come to the realization that communication is not one sided, to get my point across I must make sure that the person I am communicating to understands the message I am putting across.

There was an incident at work where I had misread a text message that my colleague had sent. The message said, "I will be arriving late but do not worry" which I the replied "K". Now even though my colleague and I banter a lot writing "K" instead of "not to worry", I came across as rude. My colleague was offended, and I had to apologize because of this I now make sure text full words and not just type "text slang".

In learning how to do this I applied what I learnt in this module which is communicating through a media channel using written communication. (Morgan, 2017, p.242).

Team-working

This I found to be the most important skill I needed as I have a team that I manage in my business. There many personalities in a team so at times a team can go through different stages before they work together effectively. One of these the theories that we have learnt in this module is the Belbin's team roles. (Belbin, 1981).

I have understood that different personalities make up a team and that there are strengths and weaknesses in everyone.

I used this to improve my team working skills by using Belbin's theory, he explains that the different personalities may include roles such as specialist, team-worker and sharper. In recognizing this I was able to effectively use my team highlighting their roles and helping them develop those strengths. One example is team member A is very disciplined and has very good time keeping, I decided to give them the role as a shaper, so I made them team leader. Because of this they were able to utilize their role and I was able to pass on some responsibilities and focus on other projects in the business. (Belbin 1981).

Presentation Skills

Until I did this module, I did not have presentation skills. I would get nervous and no matter how much I prepared the result would always be the same. As stated in (Morgan 2017, p.179) at times the feeling of anxiety comes from the fear of the unknown, such questions like, what would people think? What if I mess up?

These questions made me doubt everything that I had planned.

What helped me be better is when I realized that I was presenting to people that were actually interested in what I have to say so the negative thoughts I had were just an illusion.

Fake it till you make it is something that I would recommend because when I started to act confident, I started to feel confident too. This was all put into practice when I had to present some of the products we sell, my company held a stand at a business seminar and so I had to do a mini presentation showcasing the different products we have and why they are good. I was

honestly so nervous but using the presentation skills I learnt in this module, I was able to do better than ever before. (Kaul 2005).

Using these skills, I have learnt to use appropriate strategies for anxiety before a presentation. I can now prepare, structure and deliver a good verbal presentation. (Morgan 2017, p.179).

Academic Writing

In reflecting on how much I have learnt from this module I cannot miss out how I am now able to put together a written assignment. This is something I have not done since secondary. Things like putting together complex sentences which are made up of one independent clause and one complete idea and one or more dependent clause. These skills provided me with the ability to write a strong paragraph therefore now I can write a good assignment.

Understanding essay structure is very important and I have been able to learn that essays come in three main structures and those are, introduction, body and conclusion. Basic essay structure (Smarterclass, 2012).

Producing an assignment that met all the necessary requirements was a huge achievement for me. I will be using these skills in future to help my business, good writing skills and understanding the English language is crucial when working in the UK.

What this skill has done for me is that now I am able to write a C.V effectively by using the right words and paragraphs, I feel confident that I am now more employable. Good punctuation, grammar and spelling is crucial when writing. No matter how intelligent I am, If I cannot put together a constructive paragraph, I feel it could hinder my chances of being employed.

Problem Solving

In reflection to this module I have come to understand that I now know how to solve problems in a work environment. According to (Kepner and Tregoe, 2013) there is a framework for problem solving. Using this theory, I have been able to define problems in my work environment by describing

the problem in order to establish possible causes. Once that is done, I look at the most probable cause which will identify the main cause.

Although 'Problem definition' and Establishing causes' are typical processes it is important to understand that none of them will be effective if there is no honesty applied. (Morgan 2017, p.296)

One of the examples that happened in my workplace is when a mistake was made with a customer order, the order was sent to the wrong address. The mistake was made by team member A but because team member A was not being completely honest about their mistake, I was not able to find out exactly what had gone wrong in the process. In this case the theory was not able to be applied effectively. That is not to say that the theory does not work, it is to highlight a poor attitude on the part of the worker.

The good thing about something like this happening is that now I can learn from this experience so that next time something similar happens I will know what do to and what not to do.

Skills I Need Improve On

Leading Others

A lack of this skill helped me define and understand leadership. I would like to analyze how I need to improve, and which steps I can take in future to avoid these mistakes. I realized that one cannot lead others unless they are able to be an example to others. Generally, people that lead others are seen as 'more successful' than others. (Morgan 2017, p.219). There are qualities of leadership that I think I lack such as selflessness, flexibility and cultural intelligence. 16 Essential leadership skills for the workplace tomorrow (Forbes, 2017).

I times tend to be selfish, even though it is not intentional it gets in the way of my leadership. I have discovered through this module that being selfless is an important factor of being a leader. 'A leaders motivation must be sincere and not about undertaking tasks selfishly. (Morgan 2017, p.179).

Even though it is not intentional I do realize that at times when leading my team, I tend to make decisions based on what I want for them rather than involving me team in the descisions.

Flexibility is another quality that I fell I need to work on because I have a set schedule that I work by and when things change that are out my plans or control it makes me very frustrated. I unfortunately end up taking it out on the team which is not a good example of good leadership. Developing different was of leadership is best for someone like me because as Paul Harsey and Ken Blanchard predicted, no one leadership style is always going to be effective all the time. Harsey and Blanchard (1977)

Therefore, it is good that I remain flexible so that I accommodate leadership qualities effectively even if things don't go to plan.

Recognizing that there are cultural differences in a team is something I did not consider before unit I realized that I do not have as much patience as I thought I had. An example of how I concluded that I am not understanding is, when it comes to cultural differences, I tend to assume that a team member should understand or do something how I would expect things to be done. To assume is not good because one can assume wrong. Another example is that I had assumed that a team member would get a joke that I made about the clothing they had on, but they instead took offence and explained that they were wearing a very sacred traditional hat. That in fact left me very embarrassed with the whole team laughing at me.

In understanding leadership, I now know that leadership is also about self-awareness. It is not about being popular nor is it about having power, but it is in fact about serving others and guiding them to be better. My aim is to become a servant leader as published by Robert Greenleaf 1970, "the servant-leader is a servant first, it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve...the leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types."

I think this type of leadership is authentic and comes from the heart because that way I will have more empathy and understanding when

addressing my team. Being a leader first is also ok but at times one may not have experience on how to serve so they may lack empathy.

Conclusion

Finally, to sum up this report I have come to the knowledge that all skills are useful in one way or the other. How effectively those skills work is completely down to the person. I in this case no know how to use these skills to better myself in a work environment, I can apply these skills with knowledge that I have from this module. I am confident in working my way up to be an asset to wherever I work. These skills are also skills that I plan on teaching in my company. As a leader I will make sure that I do not keep this valuable information to myself. I have learnt about the things I need to improve in my leadership and taken with me theories such as Harsey and Blanchard, there is more than one way to lead and that all comes down to the type of leader I am. In being open to learning more, effectively communicating with my team, I now can say that I am working and, on the journey to becoming a great leader.

References

Forbes Coaches Council (2017) *6 Essential Leadership Skills for the Workplace*. Available at:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/12/27/16-essential-leadership-skills-for-the-workplace-of-tomorrow/#331dc7ad54ce>

(Accessed: 27th April 2019)

Morgan, P. (2017) *The business student's guide to study and employability*. London: Sage.

Smrt English (2012) *Basic Essay Structure*. Available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=162&v=7P4fzbzwwAg

(Accessed: 27th April 2019)