

Professional Career Development

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Introduction

For my reflective essay I will discuss about my professional development. In this report I will describe the role play and using Kolb's theory of reflection and I will assess my thoughts and learning on the experience. In my report I will make use of theories in order to support the frames and tools applied. The report will also include elements related to the employment framework in order to provide understanding of the processes of recruitment and employers expectations.

My name is Simona and currently I am a full time student at University of Wales Trinity Saint David and I manage a family business a coffee shop.

Reflection

For my reflection on the role play experience I am using Kolb's reflective theory, known as experiential learning. The theory has a cyclic format which means that once the process has been undergone, the cycle starts again with a new experience. The model has four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation (Kolb, 1984).

The concrete experience stage represents the experience itself and the awareness of the need to reflect on the new knowledge. It involves description of what was seen, felt and thought. The interview was constructed on five main questions "What is your biggest achievement as a chef?", "What are your strengths and weaknesses?", "Can you design a new menu?", "Tell me about a difficult situation and how you handled it?," "What are your goals?". The questions were based on the application form provided by my team member. I had the role of the interviewer and after that we switched roles.

The reflective observation stage involves deep analysis of what happened, what went good, what went bad. During my role play I tried to focus on the interview questions, but at the same time to have a good attitude and to be engaged in the interview. The lecturer gave me good feedback on my communication skills, body language and showing enthusiasm. In my role of the interviewer I found the experience of the role play to be challenging as I did not have experience for interviewing. Despite that, I was able to lead the interview professionally and to answer the interviewee's questions satisfactory. In my role of interviewee I found the experience of the role play to be challenging as I did not attend an interview in a while so I was nervous.

The abstract conceptualisation stage enhances the learning gained from the experience, which is formulated as a new idea or a modification of an existing one. I consider that I should have been

more elaborative and ask more specific questions and examples from the experience. I consider that a better way to have answered the question would have been by using more examples from my experience to highlight my skills and personality. Researches has suggested that showing personality at an interview is a balancing act as it does not have not be boring, but it does not have to be overwhelming. Employers want to know your personality to see if you can match the organisational culture and fit with the team.

Active experimentation is the stage where is put into practice what was learned in new experiences. The role play experience during the Professional Career Development module is a learning experience that enhanced my communication skills. In an interview in the role of the interviewee I have more confidence now that I had the experience of the role play and the knowledge gained in the module. I have better understanding of recruitment and selection process and how to organise an interview. This is a new knowledge that will benefit my business, being able to interview potential candidates (McLeod, 2013).

Self evaluation: self motivation, learning styles

Self motivation the “force” that drives an individual to do things. It is an important skill as it involves determination and commitment. It has complex aspects because it can be the result of multiple factors and it can differ from person to person. Motivation can be internal or external such: personal drive to achieve, initiative, optimism (Bourner, 2011).

I am a self motivated person and I always wanted to achieve and I opened my own coffee shop. This decision involved hard work and responsibility, but it is very rewarding to have my own business. That is why even if there are obstacles or issues I am driven to continue and to improve my business.

Learning styles are based on the main sensory receivers: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Nowadays the world has an accelerated pace and VAK learning styles presents a simple model for learning. This model suggests that individuals have a predominant learning style to learn more effectively. In an organisation the training should be realised using all three learning styles in order to involve all the individuals. Visual learning styles refer to individuals that learn through reading, writing, using charts and graphs, images and other visual aids. The auditory learners learn better from listening the information, speaking, explaining, questioning and other auditory activities. The kinaesthetic learning style is when individuals learn better while moving and with external stimulation like activities that involves moving, doing things, using technology (Engage Education, 2018).

I am a kinaesthetic learner I learn better on the job rather than listening to someone in a room. That is why the practical activities from the class had helped me to understand and learn better the concepts and theories. At work I learned on the job with no complex training. That is why I was able to evolve from no speaking English and clearing the tables in the restaurant to being able to lead the team, cashier balancing.

SWOT analysis

Using the SWOT analysis I look at my current skills and competences to ensure that I have a good understanding of my strengths and that I can take advantage of any identified opportunities. This will empower me to act towards my weaknesses and where I need to improve and focus my learning. It will enable me to close my skills gap by identifying what courses or training I should follow. It will also help me to be prepared or eliminate possible threats.

SWOT analysis

Strengths - Ambitious - Perseverent - Ability to solve problems - Leadership	Weaknesses - Time management - Communication skills - Restaurant accounting
Opportunities - Graduating the University - Developing own business - Developing new skills	Threats - Pandemic - Recession - Competition

Johari window

This tool of analysis is used to understand own emotional and physical relationship with others. The theory presents four areas: arena, facade, blind spot, unknown. The area reunites the information about self, known also by others. I am a leader and everyone knows that I like to take lead in a team to get things done. I am persevering person and I am not afraid of challenges. I always find a way to surpass obstacles. The facade area reunites the information about self, not known by the others I am very protective over my family and I am a private person. I do not like to share family issues with

others. The blind spot is the area reunites the information known by other, but not known by me. I found that other sees me as a strict and rigorous person and that I can be a little too harsh on others. The unknown area reunites traits that are know by self or the others. I do not know if I would be a great negotiator as I have never been in this position.

Expectations of the world of employment

When hiring employers look for confident candidates that have relevant experience with examples that match their abilities (HubSpot, 2015). The organisation want the candidate to fit with the organisational culture and the team which usually is emphasised by “small talk” at the interview where you can show your personality (Reed, 2021). Educational background is also important as well as showing enthusiasm and passion for the job and that you are prepared for the interview by demonstrating how the candidate would benefit the organisation and give a good performance (Linkedin, 2016).

The Guardian (2013) states that employers look for different types of factors related to personality and knowledge and experience: organised, communication skills, motivated, qualified, flexibility, degree, commitment, passionate, tracked record, innovative.

Career ambitions and aspirations

In order to discuss my career ambitions and aspirations I will be using SMART objectives framework and I will establish my goals and develop an action plan for my professional development. I am currently managing a coffee shop which is a family business. I intend to develop the business, but also my focus is to progress at my job and continue my career development.

This experience will help me get experience in leading and managing a business and will help me towards my career goal to become a restaurant manager.

Applying SMART objectives: specific- I want to become a restaurant manager, Measurable- I get experience in managing own business for over a year and I study at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, achievable- it has been researched in the previous section that employers look at experience and education and this will help me in getting the job, realistic- this is very important to me as I have worked in the restaurant industry for several industries and had started from low skills

positions, timely- my goal time frame is to graduate the course form the University and get my Certificate.

Personal Development Plan

Personal Development Plan (PDP) is the self reflection organised in step by step plan that includes concrete for methods of achievement of the established goals. The PDP can be used for personal goals, in an organisational context or to fulfil academic based goals. Creating a Personal Development Plan helps with achieving future goals, with maintaining self motivation, and to be proactive and plan the required steps and time tracking.

Personal and Development Plan

Skills to be improved	How to achieve	Potential obstacles	Completion date
Communication skills	Learning about communication and practicing during the course and at work	Health problems	01.10.2021
Time Management	Practicing time management for writing assignments, at work for meeting deadlines	Procrastination	01.10.2021
Restaurant accounting	Enrolling to an online course for learning the basis for restaurant accounting	No time or finances	01.05.2022

In my Personal and Development Plan I established three main goals to reduce my gap skills: communication skills, time management and restaurant accounting. I need to improve my written and verbal communication to be able to express exactly my thoughts and ideas. At the University I

prefer written communication as I can do it on my own pace and use translation aids, but I find it a slow process that I need to improve. Also at work oral communication when I speak with customers or delegate tasks to the staff to express clear and concise ideas. During my course at the University I aim to develop and practice this skills. Also at work I want make use of the knowledge learned at the University. The completion date of my course is October 2021. The next skill I need to improve is time management as I can get quite chaotic and procrastinate at times. I want to focus on using time management to complete assignments and deadlines at work. The timeline for this is the completion date of my course October 2021. The restaurant accounting is helping me towards my career goals and I will enrol to an online course for restaurant accounting which I aim to complete within a year.

Conclusion

This report has given me the opportunity to reflect on my personal development. I had used tools of analysis for self awareness which led me construct an action plan to help me achieve my career goals to become a restaurant manager. The course that I am doing at the University has an important role for my personal and professional development and helped me understand through knowledge, theories and models what are the expectations of the employers, how to conduct an interview, how to promote best the skills and how to succeed at an interview. The Personal and Development Plan is realised after complex analysis and evaluation of my skills and knowledge and their relevance for the job I want to.

References

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Appendices

Private & Confidential Application for Employment

To ensure that you are able to complete the application form in full, please refer to the short-listing criteria on the job description.

Position Applied For	Manager
How did you learn about this vacancy?	Indeed

1. Personal Details				
Title	Mrs			
Surname	Macaran			
Previous Name				
Forenames	Simona Elena			
Address				
Post Code				
Telephone number		Mobile No		
E-mail address				
National Insurance Number				
1a. Additional Information				
Do you hold a full, clean driving license valid in the UK?	Yes	Yes		
Do you have the right to work in the UK without restriction? (Proof of right to work in the UK ID will be required)	Yes	Yes		

2. Employment History The last 5 years employment should be detailed, including any gaps in employment. Please continue on a separate sheet if required.				
Current or Most Recent Employment				
Employers Name	Friends Place Café			

Address	N/A			
Postcode	N/A			
Job Title	Waitress/ business owner			
Dates of Employment	From	20/05/2021	To	Date
Reason for leaving		Salary	£25.00	
Brief outline of main responsibilities and key duties	Being a family business I am responsible to supervise all the front of the house operations. I am also greeting customers, serving and assisting them. I ensure food orders are made correctly by the kitchen staff, when necessary helping with cleaning, washing up, wiping tables, removing debris. Using the cash register, accepting payments by cash or card, cashier balancing			

2. Employment History The last 5 years employment should be detailed, including any gaps in employment. Please continue on a separate sheet if required.				
Current or Most Recent Employment				
Employers Name	Kemer			
Address	N/A			
Postcode	N/A			
Job Title	Waitress			
Dates of Employment	From	1/05/2015	To	01/06 /2021
Reason for leaving	Opening own business	Salary	£21000	

Brief outline of main responsibilities and key achievements	Customer service, ensuring customer is happy with the service. Taking orders and bringing food to tables and helping with the cleaning and maintaining a clean and safe environment. Performing shift leader duties with administrative, cashier balancing.			
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Previous Employment				
Employers Name	Giardino			
Job Title	Waitress			
Dates of Employment	From	01/04/2008	To	01/02/2009
Reason for leaving	Maternity	Salary	£17000	
Brief outline of main responsibilities and key achievements	Customer service, cleaning tables, helping with washing up			

Previous Employment				
Employers Name				
Job Title				
Dates of Employment	From		To	
Reason for leaving		Salary		
Brief outline of main responsibilities and key achievements				

Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

3. Formal Qualifications and Training & Development				
Continue on a separate piece of paper if required. You will be required to provide original qualification certificates if successful.				

Secondary Education Qualifications				
Name of Qualification	Date Gained	Level	Grade	Awarding Body
Baccalaureate Diploma	15/07/1996		8.40	Moreni Highschool

Further/Higher Education Qualifications				
Name of Qualification	Date Gained	Level	Grade	Awarding Body
CertHE in skills for workplace	01/08/2021	4		Ofqual

Professional Qualifications				
Name of Qualification	Date Gained	Level	Grade	Awarding Body

CPD / Training and Development	
Brief description / course title	Date Taken

4. Interests and hobbies

Please provide details of your hobbies / leisure activities / voluntary work

I have a passion for sewing as I am a creative person and I have great attention to detail.

Another hobby of mine is hairdressing and I learned about it before starting to work in restaurant industry.

I like nature and spending time in nature, that is why my family and I enjoy traveling to various locations.

5. Referencing Referencing required for 2 full years (with a minimum of 2 references). At least 1 reference should be your current or most recent employer. Please confirm any existing personal / family relationship with existing PRC employees			
References (Current or most recent employer)			
Name of Referee			
Job Title			
Employers Name			
Address			
Postcode			
Telephone Number		Ext. Number	
E-Mail Address	T		
Are you willing for this referee to be approached prior to interview?	Yes No		

References			
Name of Referee			
Job Title			
Employers Name			
Address			
Postcode			
Telephone Number		Ext. Number	
E-Mail Address			
Are you willing for this referee to be approached prior to interview?	Yes No		

6. Reason for applying

Please detail below reasons for applying for the position including your skills, experience and attributes.

Since starting to work in the restaurant industry I developed and learned a multitude of skills and knowledge. I learned the basics of running a restaurant, from ensuring the cleaning standards to administrative tasks, from cash balancing to leading the team. That is why I consider that I am very good organised individual, with good leadership skills for team management and able to work under pressure. The confidence gained at my job determined me to decide to open our own coffee shop.

Please specify how you meet the criteria for this role.

7. Declaration

Please complete the following declaration and sign it in the appropriate place below.

I certify that:

- All the information given to me on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge
- All questions relating to me have been accurately and fully answered
- I possess all the qualifications which I claim to hold

Signed:

Date:06/07/2021

Print Name:

Simona Elena Macaran

My questions as an interviewer

1. What is your experience as a chef and what is your biggest achievement?
2. If you were requested to introduce a certain menu would you find it challenging?
3. How would you act if a customer would send a meal back to the kitchen?
4. Are you considering yourself a team player? And what is your usual role in a team?
5. Do you have knowledge with budgeting, purchasing and inventory?