

Professional Career Development

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Recruitment and Selection.....	3
Personal Development Plan.....	4
Self-Evaluation Plan.....	5
Conclusion.....	7
References.....	8
Appendix.....	9

1.Introduction

In this report, I will be analysing the key elements of professional career development and summarising the results of our discovery. This will range from recruitment and selection (role play review) to a personal development plan and self-evaluation.

2. Recruitment and Selection

2.1 Kolb's Reflective Cycle

For this reflection piece, I will be using the Kolb's reflective cycle. This cycle as described in a FourWeekMBA article (Cuofano, 2022) is a, "is a holistic learning and development process based on the reflection of active experiences."

It also consists of four stages known as concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation which I will demonstrate in this report.

2.2 Concrete experience

In week ten, we completed an interview role play after a mock practice in week eight where we put into action the tools we learnt over the module. As a pair, we took turns in playing the part of both interviewer and interviewee.

2.3 Reflective Observation

During reflection, I found that one of the biggest factors in a productive interview was confidence, whether that be natural or faked. It was important to show a level of confidence to the interviewer as trust is required in any successful candidate. This also meant being aware of body language which I used to my advantage in addition to consistent eye contact and an active interest in the conversation. One downside, however, was occasionally being unable to give a fully detailed and structured answer due to the pressure of the competitive situation.

2.4 Abstract Conceptualisation

The tools we have learnt for this roleplay are essential for future career endeavours. It also teaches us about our own behaviour when quick thinking skills are needed in addition to previous research.

2.5 Active Experimentation

In future, I will be using this example as a guide for interviews by consistently learning from both good and bad experiences.

3. Personal Development Plan

In this lesson, we created a personal development plan to help us identify our goals and how to achieve them. For my chosen career, I aspire to become a published author and to achieve the desired outcome, it is important to understand the required skills and target areas of development.

This indeed article (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023), highlights the essential skills for my chosen career. These are listed as;

1. Communication
2. Research
3. Time Management

4. Adaptability
5. Discipline
6. Creativity
7. Knowledge of spelling, grammar, and punctuation

Based on the skills listed above, I find that my areas for development are time management and discipline. Therefore, the most important task is sticking to a set schedule to consistently develop my skills.

4. Self-evaluation

In this topic, we were given a range of tools to help understand and develop ourselves. This section will cover what we learnt and draw conclusions based on the findings.

4.1 Lifelines

In this module, we covered many different tools and completed exercises to help with our professional career development. The first of these were lifelines where we reflected on the events that led to where we are now.

From a young age, I often moved schools which was partly due to family issues. Throughout this, I found writing helped me cope. It started as a creative hobby when I was very young but began to morph into a coping mechanism to deal with the changes and challenges around me.

During this constant state of moving around, I also struggled with confidence and motivation. This in turn led to me questioning my place and identity.

When I entered secondary, I found myself facing even bigger challenges as I suffered from memory problems and insomnia due to severe depression. It was my lowest point of which I had multiple counselling sessions and interventions before moving once again.

After leaving secondary, I again struggled with transitioning as I left my newfound friends for college and began to navigate the new adult world. I'd chosen a year's course in travel and tourism with no real ambition or idea of what I wanted to do. I believed my passion for writing was just that and would be near impossible to make a career or living of, so I kept this interest to myself.

Following the course, I was left stuck with no other qualifications or experience. Still, I was pressured by my parents to find a job and make my own money despite having little to no motivation in my life.

Eventually, I landed a small part time job working for royal mail; a temporary position over the Christmas period. This lasted only three weeks as I had trouble with timekeeping and performance since I lacked the motivation.

My next job was a full-time team member at McDonald's which led to a new depression. I became filled with anxiety due to the stress of working in such a fast-paced environment. After nearly three months, I was sacked again due to poor performance as I fell behind my colleagues.

I subsequently reached breaking point. Fortunately, my parents came to accept my struggles and allowed me to take time out to recover mentally. During this time, I started taking medication to help which began taking small effects.

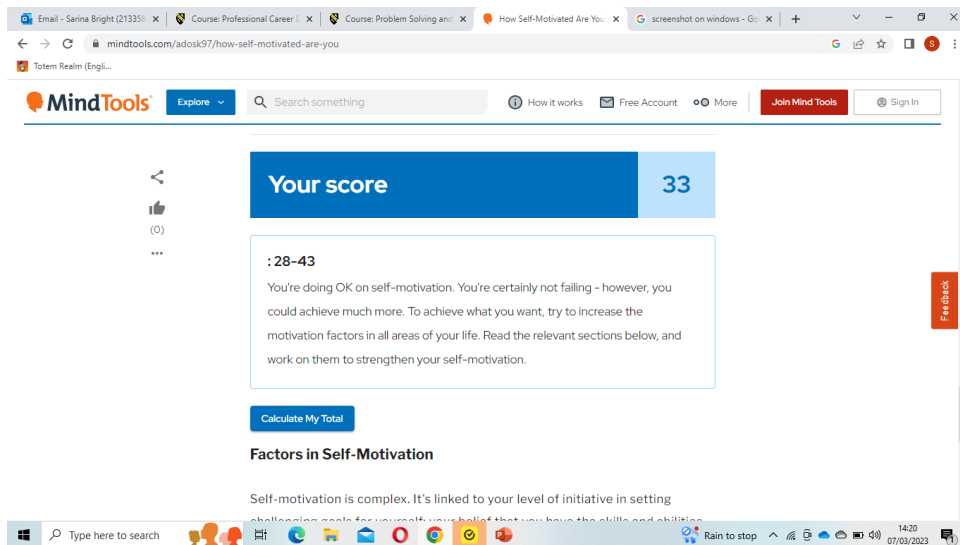
A year after, I started a new working experience as an administrative assistant in the emergency department. Though I was not fully satisfied with work, I found that I coped far better than my previous jobs as I could better balance my workload. This job came with its own ups and downs but ultimately, I knew I could not continue in this career since writing was always my only passion and would not be happy otherwise. It was then that I decided to take the first steps by joining this university so I could gain the needed qualifications to progress into a happier future.

The purpose of this lifeline exercise as explained in a commitment article (Commitment Staff, 2021), is that it is "designed to help you reflect on your life and identify stories that shaped who you are today, the values you have as a person and your motivations in learning and leading."

This is in addition to informing us in our future decisions.

4.2 Motivation and Learning Styles

During class, we were asked to take a quiz through a 'Mind Tools' article (MindTools Content Team, n.d.) to assess our motivation levels as seen attached below.



Upon reflection, I realised although my motivation levels were generally low, they also fluctuated sometimes which often reflected my mental state at that point in time.

In this class, we were also quizzed on our learning styles. The main three were kinaesthetic, visual, and auditory. My result was a combination of the latter two.

These learning styles are equally disadvantageous as they are beneficial. On one hand, we can better understand how we learn best. However, we are also limited by simply categorising our complex natures.

4.3 SWOT

The most frequently used tool during this course is the SWOT analysis. SWOT consists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Opportunities and threats are the external components which may affect us while strengths and weakness are internal factors.

As explained in a PublicSectorPeople article (Harris, 2022), strengths and opportunities are, “designed to help users identify the strengths and opportunities an organisation/institution or individual has which will aid in their further growth and development.

In my own personal analysis, I found that my main strengths were creativity and flexibility while my weaknesses were consistency and discipline.

One possible threat to my development would be failing to complete my certificate with the needed grades to progress. Another would be myself losing confidence to follow through as I also have alternating motivation levels.

Opportunities however would be successfully completing this course and entering a new university to start a BA degree in English.

4.4 SMART

Another tool we learnt was the SMART objectives. These are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound. This is a useful tool as they help organise far-fetched goals into realistic timeframe. As stated in a Corporate Financial Institute article (CFI Team, 2023), “The SMART method helps push you further, gives you a sense of direction, and helps you organize and reach your goals.”

4.5 Johari’s Window

My personal favourite of the covered tools is Johari’s window as it depicts the perception of self. This tool can be used in both a personal and professional context.

As stated in Toby Sinclair article (Sinclair, 2021), “The Johari Window improves self-awareness and mutual understanding between individuals within a group”. The article further explains that this tool can be especially useful for leaders to improve their rapport with the team by having a better understanding of themselves, or self-perception.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this module was the most useful in guiding us to create a realistic development plan in our personal and professional lives. Additionally, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of ourselves to reflect on and improve in the future.

References

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Appendix

Job application form

Application for [Editorial Assistant] -

Your details

Name: Sarina Bright

Education and training

Please give details:

Gcse educated with pending certificate in Business Skills for the Workplace.

Qualifications

Please give details:

Spanish- A

English- B

History- C

Ethics- C

CertHE Business Skills for the Workplace (pending)

Employment history

Your current or most recent employer

Name of employer: NHS

Job title: Administrative Assistant (Emergency Department)

Length of time with employer: Six months

Reason for leaving: End of contract

Duties:

File checking and record keeping

Liaising with staff and patients

Mailing letters to doctors/GP

Receiving phone calls

Previous employers

Please tell us about other jobs you have done and about the skills you used or learned in those jobs.

Supporting statement

Please tell us why you applied for this job and why you think you are the best person for the job.

As an avid reader, I believe this is the perfect opportunity for me to grow both on a personal and professional level. I have a natural affinity for literature combined with business smarts which I have developed from my course in Business Skills for the Workplace. I also have administrative experience within the NHS to supplement my existing skills.

Right to work in the UK

Do you need a work permit to work in the UK? Yes / No

References

Please give the names and contact details of 2 people who we can ask to give you a reference. We may ask them before an employment offer is made. We will not ask your current employer until we get your permission.

Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided on this form is correct and I accept that providing deliberately false information could result in my dismissal.

Name: Sarina Bright

Signature:

Date: 21/04/2023

Q1. Tell me about yourself

Q2. Why do you want to work here?

Q3. Why should we hire you?

Q4. What can you tell us about this company?

Q5. What is your weakness?

Q6. Can you give us an example of organisational skills?

Q7. Do you have experience working in a group?