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Introduction

Career development is a continuous process that involves self-assessment, goal setting, and strategic planning. My career journey began as a cleaner, and through dedication and persistence, I have progressed to the role of site supervisor over the course of ten years in the cleaning industry. This reflective essay utilises SMART Goals, SWOT Analysis, and Maslow's Motivation Theory to evaluate my strengths, areas for improvement, and long-term aspirations. Using Rolfe's Reflection Framework (What? So what? Now what?), I will analyse my personal and professional growth, identify key learning experiences, and establish a structured path for my future career progression.

What? (Describing My Career Journey and Current Situation)

I came to the United Kingdom in 2006, as you probably know, at that time the United Kingdom was part of the European Union and my idea was that the job I did (professional driver) in the Czech Republic would be able to do here in the UK, but I was wrong and that's why I started working as a cleaner in supermarket. After nine years I didn't move anywhere and so I started working in another company where I am to this day. My professional career began in the cleaning industry, where I started as a cleaner. Over the past ten years, through hard work, continuous learning, and a proactive approach to personal development, I have successfully progressed to the role of site supervisor. This journey has taught me valuable skills, including leadership, time management, and problem-solving.

However, despite my achievements, I recognise that further professional development is necessary to advance my career even further. While I have gained substantial hands-on experience in managing teams, I still need to refine my leadership abilities, enhance my communication skills, and expand my industry knowledge. To facilitate this growth, I have applied the following frameworks:

1. SMART Goals – to create a structured plan for my career advancement.
2. SWOT Analysis – to assess my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
3. Maslow's Motivation Theory – to understand the driving forces behind my career aspirations and motivation.

So What? (Analysing My Development and Learning Experiences)

1. SMART Goals – Setting a Clear Path for Career Progression

Applying the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), I have developed clear and structured goals to enhance my skills and advance my career further.

Short-term Goal: Improve my leadership and team management skills by enrolling in a leadership training course within the next three months.

Medium-term Goal: Develop my communication and networking abilities by attending at least three industry events or professional workshops within the next six months.

Long-term Goal: Progress from my current site supervisor role to a facilities manager position within the next three years.

By following SMART goals, I have transformed my aspirations into well-defined, measurable objectives, ensuring that my progress is both trackable and achievable.

2. SWOT Analysis – Understanding My Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Conducting a SWOT analysis has given me clarity on my career standing and areas for development:

Strengths:

Ten years of experience in the cleaning industry.

Strong work ethic and adaptability

Leadership experience gained from my current role as site supervisor.

Problem-solving skills and ability to handle operational challenges efficiently.

-Weaknesses: - Limited formal qualifications in leadership and management. - Need to improve communication and networking skills to expand career opportunities.

- Balancing workload and further education while working full-time.

Opportunities:

- Access to leadership training and professional development courses.
- Networking with industry professionals to explore career advancements.
- Potential promotions within my organisation based on my experience and commitment.

- Threats:

- Competitive job market requiring additional qualifications.
- Risk of stagnation if I do not continue learning and upskilling.
- Work-life balance challenges while pursuing further education.

By recognising my strengths, I can leverage them to accelerate my career, while addressing my weaknesses through targeted training and professional development.

3. Maslow's Motivation Theory – Understanding My Career Aspirations

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has helped me understand my motivations and the factors influencing my career decisions:

- Physiological Needs: I have achieved financial stability through full-time employment in the cleaning industry.
- Safety Needs: Advancing my career by pursuing additional training and securing higher-level roles ensures long-term job security.
- Social Needs: As a site supervisor, I work closely with teams, but I aim to expand my professional network to explore further career opportunities.
- Esteem Needs: I take pride in my achievements, and I strive to build confidence by continuously learning and developing leadership skills.
- Self-Actualisation: My ultimate goal is to progress into a facilities management role, where I can utilise my experience and leadership skills to make a meaningful impact.

Understanding my position within Maslow's hierarchy has reinforced the importance of

continuous growth and development, motivating me to take deliberate steps toward achieving my career aspirations.

Now What? (Applying Learning to Future Development)

Reflecting on my journey, I realise that strategic planning and self-improvement are crucial for my continued career advancement. Moving forward, I will:

1. Further Develop My SMART Goals – Regularly review and refine my objectives to align with career growth opportunities.
2. Leverage My Strengths – Apply my leadership and problem-solving abilities to take on more responsibilities and showcase my potential for higher roles.
3. Address My Weaknesses – Enrol in relevant courses to enhance my leadership, communication, and networking skills.
4. Stay Motivated – Continue applying Maslow's theory by ensuring that my career choices align with my values and long-term aspirations.
5. Seek Mentorship and Networking Opportunities – Engage with industry professionals and seek guidance from experienced managers to gain insights into career progression.

Models Not Used in My Reflection

Honey & Mumford Learning Styles

I chose not to use the Honey & Mumford Learning Styles model as it primarily focuses on identifying preferred learning methods (Activist, Reflector, Theorist, and Pragmatist). While understanding my learning style is valuable, my career development requires a broader framework that includes goal setting and strategic planning, which is better supported by SMART Goals, SWOT Analysis, and Maslow's Motivation Theory.

Johari Window

The Johari Window model is useful for self-awareness and understanding how others perceive me, which is beneficial in communication and teamwork. However, my primary focus in this reflection is on structured career progression rather than interpersonal perception. While self-awareness is important, I found that SWOT Analysis provided a more comprehensive approach to identifying my strengths and areas for improvement.

Personal Branding

Personal branding is an essential tool for career development, particularly for individuals looking to market themselves in competitive industries. However, my focus is currently on developing leadership, time management, and communication skills rather than self-promotion. At this stage, I prioritised models that provide strategic career planning over personal branding.

Ikigai

Ikigai is a Japanese concept that helps individuals find fulfillment by aligning their passion, mission, vocation, and profession. While this is a valuable philosophy, my reflection is more structured around measurable career goals and professional development strategies. I opted for SMART Goals and Maslow's Motivation Theory as they provide a clearer pathway to career progression.

Conclusion

This reflection has provided valuable insights into my professional growth, achievements, and areas for improvement. My ten-year journey from a cleaner to a site supervisor has been a testament to my dedication and perseverance. By applying SMART Goals, SWOT Analysis, and Maslow's Motivation Theory, I have developed a structured approach to career progression.

I now have a clear vision of where I want to be and the steps required to reach my goal of becoming a facilities manager. Moving forward, I will remain committed to continuous learning, self-improvement, and strategic career planning, ensuring long-term success and personal fulfilment in my professional journey.

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