

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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Introduction

Employability skills are the group of abilities that are required within an individual involving development of a knowledge base, expertise mindset and level, which is necessary for attaining success within a workplace. Employability skills are considered as necessary qualifications for many positions within a workplace and are important for an individual to succeed within any level of business environment. **This study focuses on the employability skills needed for a manager**, organising study like organising space and resources, gathering relevant information, analysing literature and developing an appropriate writing style. Along with that, a reflection of a workplace experience will be done using appropriate reflecting style.

Concept of Employability skills

Employability or soft skills are the skills that an employer seeks within an employee, which goes beyond their qualifications and experience. These skills are defined as the skills that are required within an individual who makes them employable. In addition to good technical understanding and knowledge of the subject, employees outlines specific skill sets that are required within an employee. In accordance to McMillan and Weyers (2006), these skills will allow these individuals to carry out their role using the best of their ability. **In organisations like McDonalds, as a manager, employability depends on the knowledge, skills, attitudes and ways in which they utilise their skills to provide service to the customers.**

Identification of skills

Communication Skills

The employees are required to communicate well with their supervisors and fellow employees for conveying and receiving messages effectively via various communication channels. Good communication skills will assist an individual to be hired, obtain promotions and achieving success throughout their career. Communication can be verbal as well as non-verbal. Non-verbal communication can be done by using body language, and signalling. As per the views of Mackevic (2014), the communication skills can be developed by an individual by various methods which includes writing reports and assignments, making oral presentations and getting involved in face to face communications with other people. **For instance, for a manager in organisations like McDonalds, communication is an important**

strategy as it allows leadership of a organisation to implement their vision and strategy and the managers are required to communicate these objectives to their employees in an effective manner.

Team Work

Teamwork is essential skills required by an employee within an organisation for getting along with the individuals they are working with and involves working towards a common goal.

A manager in McDonalds can promote effective teamwork among their employees by identifying their strengths, defining objectives, setting goals and measuring outcomes. They also provide an important role in overseeing progress, providing necessary feedback and rewarding team whenever they have achieved something.

Problem Solving

Problem solving refers to finding solutions when an individual is facing difficulty while performing a specific task and involves being able to utilise logical thinking for figuring out things. As opined by Greetham (2013), problem-solving skills can be developed by an individual by doing research assignments within their studies, dealing with problems at workplace, and obtaining feedbacks from other people about the methods they use for solving the problems.

Success of an organisation like McDonald depends upon problem solving capability of their managers. The managers, who have the ability to think critically, analyse the situation and find an appropriate and accurate solution which will enable the business to thrive and prosper.

Initiative and Enterprise

Initiative and enterprise are the skills that are required for developing new and better opportunities at work. As stated by Pears and Shields (2010), this ability contributes to innovative outcomes, which involve raising issues related to occupational health and safety and adapting to new situations. It involves identifying opportunities, developing a creative, strategic and long-term vision as well as transforming ideas into action.

Planning and organising

Planning and organising skills within a manager means identifying a task to be performed and devising a way to achieve it. It involves developing timelines for a project and meeting deadlines. As opined by Morgan (2016), an individual can develop planning and organising skills by establishing a timeline and sticking to that, assisting in organising an event, managing time around their work, family and study commitments.

Self-management

Self-management is the ability within an individual which helps them to be more productive at workplace. This skill allows an employee to communicate efficiently with their fellow employees, supervisors and customers. As per the views put forward by Maund *et al.* (2017), it has been evident that self management also helps an employee to make effective decisions and improve time management.

Learning

Learning is a skill in which an individual desires to learn something new and able to pick them quickly. It also involves taking up new tasks and adapting to change.

Organising study

Time Management

Time management is the method of planning and organising the time which is spent on certain activities in order to increase efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. It involves organising various activities of a person relating to their social life, work, family and their personal life. If an individual is able to manage his time effectively, it provides them with a choice to manage their activities within their own time. Time management is an activity which can be utilised for maximising the overall benefits for a set of activities within a specific period of time. In accordance to Greetham (2013), time management can be aided with a specific set of tools and techniques, which can be utilised for managing time while completing certain tasks, goals and projects. **An individual who wishes to be a manager at McDonald's, he is required to led by example by being punctual at their workplace. If a manager wishes his employees to reach work on time, he should be disciplined and adhere to guidelines of the organisation for their employees to respect policies of the company.** The individual is to understand the difference between urgent and important and manage their time according to it. They are required to use a grid like priority matrix and organising their tasks in appropriate categories:



Figure 1: The Priority Matrix

(Source: Influenced from Gibbs, 1988)

Organising resources

An organisation is required to organise and allocate resources within various departments in an effective manner. During the process of organising, the managers coordinate with their employees, policies, and procedures for facilitating the goals which are identified within their plan. For a manager, organising resources provides efficient and fuller utilisation of human, financial and physical resources. Allocating proper jobs enables a manager to avoid work overlapping and ensures optimum use of resources without any wastage. It allows enterprises to adjust changes in environment and for ensuring smooth functioning of enterprise, organising suitably modifies structure of an organisation and various inter-relationships that are existing within an enterprise so that, it continues to expand in spite of these changes. Organising is an effective process which involves a systematic review of finances, human resources and priorities. As per the views put forward by Gibbs (1988), it has been evident that, before implementation of a plan, the managers of an organisation are required to organise the business assets for executing the plan efficiently.

Gathering relevant information

Effective Note Taking

In order to gather relevant information, a learner or an employee is required to take necessary notes. Taking notes are important because of the two reasons:

- While the person is reading or listening, he is required to take necessary notes which enable him to concentrate. For taking the notes, the individual is required to understand the subject as reading and listening are interactive tasks.
- Taking notes does not suggest noting down everything that is mentioned or written but it is required to decide actively what is necessary and how it is related to the subject.
- Notes enable an individual to maintain a record of the things which have been mentioned and are useful for revising in future for examination or different reasons (Cottrell, 2011).

Good notes are needed to clear, concise and accurate and the individuals are required to present the relationship among the ideas. As discussed by Cottrell (2008), a manager in McDonalds is required to issue their employees with notepads, pens, registers and folders to their employees. The employees are to be pointed out if they write out the mistakes made by them. It is the responsibility of managers to tell their employees to efficiently manage their tasks. The notes taken by them are required to be checked by the managers. For taking notes, an individual is required to first understand the subject matter, which is discussed in the lecture or in a business meeting and then make subsidiary points for relating them to the main topics that are discussed.

Using the Library and Internet

Using library and Internet are various ways through which an individual or an organisation can collect information. Some of these ways requires an individual to possess certain soft skills as well as technical skills. As influenced by Cottrell (2010), information about different customers can be collected by the manager of organisations like McDonalds from different locations by means of internet research and can be collected by being in a specific location and visiting a library. By making use of internet, an individual can gain access varied range of information through different sources. Library consists of a range books and journals from where the information can be collected for their use which is time consuming and requires patience. Gathering information from internet is easily accessible as compared to library.

Reflection of own experience

Gathering information while employed at an organisation is important as it enables them to gather work experience and achieve certain tasks which are allotted to them in an efficient manner. The individual is required to take appropriate notes when the supervisor is briefing the team about the task and how it is needed to be done, which enables him to take appropriate actions when performing the task (Cottrell, 2010). I am working as a crew trainer at McDonald's and is responsible for training staffs and assisting customers with quality service. At organisation, my role was to instruct and motivate the crew, serving customers, keeping the restaurant clean and organised, preparing food and ensuring that rules are followed, as well as monitoring performance of the employees. The management within the organisation had a very diverse workplace which enabled me to showcase my creativity and present my ideas to the management. The managers at McDonald's held training session and meetings with the employees and crew trainers for ensuring that quality services are provided at their outlets as well as the individual follows the rules and regulations at workplace. Since the business meetings very long and lots of information were discussed, I was required to note down the main points of the information which were provided during the meeting. It helped me in a great manner, as during the project, I had all the necessary information which was required for successfully completing the project. During the project, I was able to collect information from internet which provided with lots of tools for achieving the tasks which were allotted to me.

Communication and presenting information

An employee is required to effectively communicate with his fellow employees, supervisors and customers for transferring the necessary information in an effective manner. An audience will understand any information or data if it presented in an appropriate manner. As evident from the studies of Cottrell (2008), for presenting information effectively and sensibly by using various application software, it is important to understand the features and facilities, which are provided by the software for example when, writing a letter by means of word processor rather than using a spreadsheet. The word processor will provide all the facilities to the presenter for presenting the texts within a letter so that the recipient is able to understand it effectively. For a manager at McDonald's, communication is an important strategy as it allows leadership in the workplace to implement their vision and strategy and the managers are required to communicate these objectives to their employees in an effective manner.

Developing an appropriate writing style

Planning and structuring essays and reports

While writing a report or an essay, an individual is required to understand the context of the subject and plan in accordance to it. Then, he is to devise a structure in order to cover all the aspects of the subject he is needed to cover (Morgan, 2016). For planning a report, an individual is required to keep following points in mind which includes:

- Defining the purpose and problems of the report
- Defining the audience which he wishes to transmit information
- Determining the ideas which are to be included within the report.
- Sorting, evaluating and organising the information in accordance with the report.
- Finally, the outline is to be prepared.

Structuring a report can be done by considering the following methods:

- The contents are to be listed in order they appear
- The sections or subsections are to be numbered in a proper way
- Every section of report is required to have an appropriate title.
- Appendices are to be listed in a separate page
- Illustrations and figures are to be listed separately
- Every report should begin with introduction

Linking Ideas together

Within an academic writing, it is important to present an idea or an argument clearly and cohesively. Along with it, it is important to discuss and evaluate existing ideas or research regarding the discussion topic. The individual is required to connect the ideas in academic writing, which will assist him to achieve both the tasks. As opined by Maund *et al.* (2017), for making appropriate utilisation of words and phrases which will signal a relationship will reinforce and reveal the direction in which the argument is heading and will establish clear relationships between their writing sections. For developing an appropriate writing style, it is necessary to use certain connecting words or phrases for bridging the gaps among the ideas.

Conclusion

Employability skills are the skills that are required within an individual which makes them employable. These skills will allow these individuals to carry out their role using the best of

their ability. Planning and organising the time which is spent on certain activities in order to increase efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. Time management is an activity which can be utilised for maximising the overall benefits for a set of activities within a specific period of time. Employability skills are the skills that are required within an individual, which makes them employable. From the above topic, it can be concluded that, in addition to good technical understanding and knowledge of the subject, employees outlines specific skill sets that are required within an employee. The major skills that are required to possess are communication skills, teamwork, problem solving, planning and organizing and self-management. While the person is reading or listening, he is required to take necessary notes, which enables him to concentrate. An employee is required to enable effective communication with his fellow employees, supervisors and customers for transferring the necessary information in an effective manner.

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