Professional Development for Strategic Managers
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**Introduction**

Human resource is a key success factor for any given organisation. Accordingly, development of human resource also has gained significant attention within contemporary organisational context. Indeed, human resource of the organisation is acknowledged as the resource that will generate a competitive advantage for the business. Accordingly, this report has being developed to emphasise the required personal and professional skills for the author in order to contribute effectively to the operations of Sainsbury PLC. To begin with author will evaluate the personal and professional skills required to achieve the strategic goals. Secondly, the author will conduct a self audit and a learning style evaluation to identify the learning style preference of the author. Finally, the author will construct a personal development plan and will implement it.
Task 01: Be able to assess personal and professional skills required to achieve strategic goals

1.1 Use appropriate methods to evaluate personal skills required to achieve strategic goals

To begin with in considering the personal profile of the author it is evident that the author is currently employed in Sainsbury PLC and employed as a Customer Service Manager. Hence, it is apparent that the author has a strategic role to play within the organisation to ensure success of the overall operations of the business and accomplishment of the goals. Indeed, Dweck (2000) recognises that range of skills available for the individuals will contribute towards effective development of own self as well as higher level contribution for the achievement of organisational objectives as well. In analysing the personal skills that is required for the author for the future of the organisation as well for the development of individual objectives it is evident that strategic goals the author has conducted a leadership skills assessment. Indeed, being a senior manager within Sainsbury PLC it is evident that author need to demonstrate higher level of leadership skills to ensure effective operations of business as well as higher level of customer satisfaction. Moreover, the customer satisfaction will be achieved through motivated staff members. Therefore, it is important that as a leader the author need to demonstrate leadership skills.

Hence, based on the skills requirement for the author it has being identified that author requires administration skills, interpersonal skills and conceptual skills (Northouse, 2007). This is because, interpersonal skills would enable author to effectively communicate with the employees in building robust relationships. Indeed, the author being a customer service manager it has being emphasised that the author will frequently get engage with communication with the customers. Moreover, Sainsbury strategic objectives have outlined that one of their key purpose of existence is to generate customer satisfaction. Thus, it is important that the author demonstrates effective interpersonal skills to contribute effectively towards achieving the organisational objectives.

On the other hand, being a strategic manager within Sainsbury PLC author has a responsibility in driving the organisation towards the success. Hence, it is critical for the author to demonstrate significant level of conceptual skills. Indeed, conceptual skills will enable the author to view the organisation holistically and develop and make strategic decisions to further enhance the overall customer service and customer relationships that is being maintained. Indeed, conceptual skills
will develop the customer service manager to enhance overall customer servicing strategy for the positive implications in customer service in future (Adair, 2007).

Additionally, for the career development of the author as well as for the future of Sainsbury PLC it is important that author needs to demonstrate significant level of administration skills. Indeed, administration skills will enable the author to better manage the resources of the organisation. For instance, being a customer service manager the author needs to manage the resources effectively to ensure the achievement of Sainsbury objectives of customer service management (Northouse, 2007).

1.2 Professional skills required to support the strategic direction of Sainsbury

Sainsbury PLC has established its continuous commitment to meet the needs and wants of the customers as the strategic direction of the organisation (Sainsbury, 2014). Accordingly, the company vision has outlined that they intend to be ‘the most trusted retailer where people love to work and shop’. Accordingly, to achieve the strategic direction and vision of Sainsbury PLC the following skills are essential for the author.

**Coaching and employee development skills**

The current role of the author represents a customer service manager position. Thus, the author will have subordinates who will be working under him who will be directly dealing with the customers. Accordingly, to achieve the overall direction of Sainsbury PLC whilst meeting customer needs and wants it is important that author need to develop coaching and employee development skills. Indeed, coaching is the process where the author will guide and direct the subordinates to achieve the stated objectives. Thus, coaching aims to emphasise on the objectives that need to be pursued to achieve the stated direction of the business (Adler, 2002). For instance, author being a manager in customer service the author has skills and knowledge on dealing with customer related issues. Therefore, it is important to emphasise on developing communication and interpersonal skills of the followers in order to develop a team which has sophisticated level of service for the customers. Indeed, the training and development opportunities provided to the employees will ensure that employees are motivated and committed towards performing the job which would necessarily motivate the individuals in achieving the stated objectives of Sainsbury PLC (Atwater and Waldman, 1998; Billet, 2000).
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**Multi tasking skills**

Being a strategic manager within Sainsbury PLC it is evident that the author will have to go through a range of tasks to enhance his professional career. Thus, multi tasking ability is crucial for the individuals. This is because multi tasking ability for the professionals will enable the author to increase the vision and skills to complete a range of tasks within limited time framing available (Drucker, 2006). Moreover, this will increase the time management skills of the individuals as well. Hence, this will improve the overall skills of the individuals towards the betterment of the author as well this will positively influence the achievement of organisational objectives as well.

**Leadership skills**

Successful achievements in professional life significantly depend on the ability of the individuals to demonstrate significant level of leadership skills. This is because a leader is a person who will motivate the individuals effectively to achieve the overall organisational objectives (Parker, 2010). Indeed, to achieve professional development it is important that the author to develop the required professional skills and charismatic capabilities as a leader to influence the subordinates for the accomplishment of the organisational objectives (Glassman, 2001).
Task 02: Be able to conduct a skills audit to identify learning style

2.1 Carry out a skills audit to evaluate the strategic skills needed to meet current and future leadership requirements

Being a professional and strategic manager it is important that the individual to be aware about the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals to provide a clear perception about the overall picture of the abilities (London and Smither, 1995). Further, it has being emphasised that there are a range of skills that would be required for the leaders and without these skills the future development of the individual as well as organisation will be incapable (Fleming, 2001). Accordingly, to identify my own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats the author has developed a SWOT analysis for himself.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time management skills</td>
<td>Decision making skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Delegation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
<td>Self confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching skills</td>
<td>Conflict management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to prioritise skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author developed (2014)

**Strengths**

To begin with it is important to consider that time management skills is essential to any given professional. This is because time management skill will enable the individuals to achieve the stated objectives of the organisation within the given time frame (Evans et al., 2010). Further, author being a customer service manager it is essential to have communication or interpersonal skills. This is because effective communication skills will enable author to evaluate the customer related problems effectively. Similarly, author has demonstrated higher level of coaching skills as well. Indeed, this has enabled author to develop the customer service team to deliver higher level of customer satisfaction. Indeed, due to the ability of the author to prioritise the tasks that need to be performed author has been able to manage the tasks allocated for him effectively. Indeed, multi tasking skills has significantly contributed towards this.
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Weaknesses

On the other hand, current assessment of the author’s capabilities has revealed that author lacks the decision-making skills. Accordingly, this will have a significant impact for the leadership development process in future. Likewise, the author has demonstrated limited level of delegation as well. This may have negative consequences on the motivation levels of the subordinates which have been identified as weaknesses of the author. Similarly, the subordinates sometimes enter arguments and conflicts. Yet, the limited skills of the author in relation to conflict management have meant that author will have subsequent issues underpinning within the team members.

Opportunities

The author being a professional it is always important that the author need to seek into options that is available for him to further enhance his skills and attributes (Brown, 2002). Therefore, to positively contribute towards the success of the organisation it is always important to develop the skills of the author. Moreover, Sainsbury PLC being a globally established organisation this has enables the author to develop the understanding of operations within a competitive environment. Moreover, this has also enabled the author to pursue his career further as well.

Threats

In developing to the future as a leader it is important that the author need to demonstrate effective understanding of the threats that could be realised in the external environment. For example, being a globalised organisation Sainsbury will face a significant amount of consequences which need to be considered by the author in developing future leadership requirements.

2.2 Apply appropriate techniques to identify preferred learning style

Learning style is the “manner in which individuals choose to or inclined to approach a learning situation” (Cassidy, 2004, p.420). However, Evans et al., (2010) recognised that learning styles as the “individuals preferred way of responding to learning tasks which change depending on the environment or context” (p.468). Moreover, it has been emphasised that preferred learning styles of individuals would differ based on range of factors such as personality traits of the individuals, learning environment etc. On the contrary the importance of this concept has been emphasised with the range of learning style literature available. Indeed, this has given to a range of learning style models and inventories which may lead to confusion. However, to assess the preferred learning style of the individuals the author has used Grasha and Reichmann (1974) model to evaluate her personal learning style preference.
Table 2: Learning styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning style</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Learner prefer to work alone and requires for little direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>Higher rate of absenteeism and poor work and study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependant</td>
<td>Depend heavily on the coacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Enjoys group working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>Attentive and responsive to the work requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Emphasise on higher achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author developed (2014) based on Grasha and Reichmann (1974)

Accordingly, to identify the preferred learning style of the author the author conducted a self assessment questionnaire and recognised that the author preferred learning style is independent. Indeed, author will be able to generate enhanced insights to the learning styles through assessment of the learning styles via 360 degree approach as well.

**360 degree approach**

360 degree feedback approach in assessment of the learning style preferences have being identified as a prominent approach and innovation in managerial concepts (Atwater and Waldman, 1998). Further, the importance of this approach has increased due to increase use by fortune 500 companies (London and Smither, 1995). Indeed, this approach looks into obtain the feedback about employees in multiple perspectives. Thus, in evaluating the author’s preferred learning style it could be argued that author could use360 degree feedback approach. This is because the 360 degree feedback approach will provide the author with range of opinions of outsiders rather than being biased towards one opinion.
Task 03: Be able to implement a personal development plan

3.1 Construct a personal development plan that meets leadership development requirements identified in the skills audit

In assessing the SWOT analysis it has been identified that there is a range of factors that need improvement in ensuring personal development. For instance, it is important for the author to develop personal development plans against developing skills such as decision making skills, delegation, and conflict management. Accordingly, the personal development plan for the author can be identified as follows:

Table 3: Personal development plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill requirement</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Measurements for success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision making skills</td>
<td>• Evaluate the reasons behind past failures of decisions made by the author</td>
<td>• Performance appraisal of year 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gaining coaching opportunities from the senior management on areas to improve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegation</td>
<td>• Consult the subordinates to identify the skills</td>
<td>• The assessment of level of employee motivation through performance appraisal mechanism as a consequence of delegation of responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing time plans to allocate responsibility to the individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self confidence</td>
<td>• Need to take initiatives</td>
<td>• The ability to develop her charisma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Need to be aware of the potential and available skills of the author</td>
<td>• The feedback could be obtained through performance appraisals or through communicating to the management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict management</td>
<td>• Need to identify the reasons behind failure of the past situations of conflict management.</td>
<td>• Minimise the conflicts between the team members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>conflict resolution and also need to evaluate the conflict avoidance methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: Author developed (2014)

3.2 Use suitable methods to assess the outcomes of a personal development plan against personal work objectives

The leadership skills assessment conducted in appendix 01 as well as the SWOT analysis has enabled the author to evaluate the skills required for personal objectives and organisational development. For example through developing skills with relation to delegation of responsibilities the author will be able to reduce the pressure on work. Further, the author will be also able to provide the organisational goals achievement effectively as well. Importantly, this will enable the author to manage the work load effectively (Mayer and Solvey, 1995). On the other hand delegation has positive implication on the overall motivation level of staff members as well. Indeed, when considering the development of conflict management it could be recognised that this will also positively influence the organisational operations. For instance, conflict avoidance strategy adopted by the author would mean the conflicts within the organisation will be minimal which will result in a situation where the author’s department’s effectiveness will be significantly increased.

3.3 Evaluate the impact of own learning against the achievement of strategic goals

Continuous learning has being identified as a process of developing an individual continuously. Indeed, development of skills and learning will have positive outcomes on achieving the overall strategic objectives of Sainsbury PLC as well as in achieving the objectives of the professional individually as well. Hence, it could be argued that learning would effectively contribute towards the achievement of learning expectations of me as well. For example, being a strategic manager within Sainsbury PLC it is evident that it is essential for me to develop my conceptual skills in order to generate strategic insights into the development of the future of the company. Indeed, this will help me to develop my skills as a manager to make strategic insights to the business (Cassidy, 2004).

Further, through development of a personal development plan and skills audit it as developed my perspectives and understanding about the areas that needs improving. Therefore, this learning will enable me to further develop my skills and contribute effectively towards achieving the strategic goals of the company. Moreover, as a consequence of the personal development plan the author realised the importance of delegation to the betterment of the future of Sainsbury PLC. Indeed, the development of delegation has increased the level of motivation among the subordinates.
Similarly, this has increased the level of career planning within the organisation as well. Thus, this has enabled the author to contribute effectively in developing the personal goals whilst achieving the organisational goals.
Conclusion

This report has been developed to evaluate the professional and personal development plans for the author. In assessing the current situation of the author, it is evident that the author is studying for his postgraduate qualification. Further, he works as a senior manager in customer service’s departments. Therefore, the author will have to look into developing his skills and capabilities further for the betterment of the organisation. In analysing the current situation, it is evident that the author lacks skills in relation to delegation, conflict management and it has been identified that as a consequence of development of future skills and organisation it is essential to develop these skills. However, in considering the current situation, the author has been recognised as an independent learner and hence the author will prefer to learn by himself. Moreover, as a consequence of the personal development plan, the author realised the importance of delegation to the betterment of the future of Sainsbury PLC. Indeed, the development of delegation has increased the level of motivation among the subordinates. Similarly, this has increased the level of career planning within the organisation as well. Therefore, this may suggest that professional development is essential for the organisational development as well as development of the individual.
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