

# Coaching And Counseling Skills

Professional development is the process by which a person maintains the quality and relevance of professional services throughout his/her working life. It is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and the development of personal qualities necessary for the education of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life.

Professional development is not a product, devised by training providers and academic institutions. It is a mindset, a habit to acquire. It requires self-directed, independent learning. It also demands an active rather than passive approach to learning. It differs from other forms of learning because it requires us to decide that needs to be learned or un-learned, how to learn it, and how to test and assess our learning.

Task 1: Using the given template and given information you are required to identify personal and professional skills that help in achieving strategic goals

In order to develop vision, mission and long term objectives for the company and make the entire organization aligned with these goals and objectives, there is a need for an effective strategic manager who is able to carry on all the functions successfully. The strategic manager acts as a leader in order to achieve long term objectives of the organization. He must lead his subordinates to the right direction and facilitate them in overcoming the hurdles and obstacles that might arise from time to time. Moreover, the manager also integrates the organization and makes the people work effectively, to achieve short term goals consistently, in order to meet the long term objectives of the organization. Thus there is a need for effective skill set managers so that they can handle all the tasks successfully.

There are various skills which are important for effective strategic management are basic management skills, time management skills, problem solving skills, stress management skills, motivational and inspirational skills, decision making skills, leadership skills, openness to change and effective communication skills. It is recommended that people must continuously monitor themselves and try to establish these skill sets in order to manage the organization in an effective manner. To understand these skills better, the skills are categorized into Personal and Professional skills. After understanding these skills, individuals can easily carry on the day to day operations effectively and can understand and apply the strategic concepts in more detail.

## Personal Skills

These are important requirements to strategic managers as they serve as a role model for their subordinates. Some important skills are:

## Time Management Skills

Time management skill is one of the most important skills to be developed and put into practice in an organization by the manager. It is one of the most important responsibilities of a manager. For this, the manager should plan accordingly before undertaking any business activity and delegating the work to his subordinates. The manager should lay down certain time limits and guidelines along with the provision of resources for his workers to the work done and what could be the possible outcomes for not following it. He should also stress on the point that work done during a certain period of time in an organization is very crucial not only in the present situation but also in the long run and so it is very important to make use of time productively. If time is not managed properly, delays in certain department in the workplace would lead to work being held up and the organization might not be able to adjust to the change in the external environment quickly and this is likely to affect the morale not only of the manager but the whole organization as well as it is more likely to lose its competitive advantage.

## Stress Management Skills

There are various uncertain events in an organization which can be stressful for the employees as well as for the managers. For example, disastrous situations may arise or organization can be subjected to sudden loss. Some situations in the business environment can also create stress among the people within or outside the organizational environment. Hence, it is important for managers to have stress management skills. It involves emotional stability, problem solving skills and decision making skills. Managers must be able to make the right decision at the right time in order to overcome stress among its employees and various other stakeholders.

## Communication Skills

Effective communication is very important for the managers. The role of managers involve and demand effective communication skills because goals, objectives, roles, responsibilities, and decisions always communicated within an organization. He must be able to communicate effectively so that the right content is delivered to various levels of organization. Conflict handling and listening are some of the examples of effective communication skills.

## Professional Skills

### Coaching and Counseling Skills

At the workplace, there are many situations in which the subordinates are facing certain issues that can affect the overall productivity of the organization. For this reason, there is a need for counseling, mentoring and coaching skills of the managers which can help the employees by suggesting them the way out of the situation. In this manner, the

productivity and other concerns for organization can be solved. Paternalistic advice can help the employee to become motivated and inspired to work in the long run.

### Leadership skills

In any organization, there are various situational factors that demands change – may it be in structure or direction of the organization. With these changes, leadership skills are required from the managers as he needs to lead the organization towards the adoption of new strategic dimension. As leading is one of the important functions of the management, these skills are necessary for the strategic managers.

### Presentation skills

There are certain situations when the manager has to represent the organization in the outside environment. In these cases, he has to perform the role of a spokesperson or a liaison. In order to perform the roles appropriately, there is a need for effective presentation skills so he can communicate his point of view and organizational motives in a better way. Presentation skills can also be used within the organization when the managers have to present their ideas or proposal in front of the board of directors and other stakeholders.

Personal and professional skills play an enormous role towards the development and success of an organizational leader and manager. It is therefore very important to develop the same within oneself for the smooth and effective running of the business. Possessing skills is not enough, but putting them to the best possible use along with the resources available in the organization is all that matters the most in getting the best out of the co-workers.

The personal and professional skills described earlier are very important in order to achieve organizational goals. Managers must use these skills in an appropriate manner in order to align the people within an organization towards specific directions. Combinations of skills can be used simultaneously. In some conditions, manager can use effective communication skills along with the leadership skills in order to motivate the followers to do certain task. In the same way, various other skill sets might be used. But it is observable that the purpose of usage of these skills is always contributing and facilitating towards achieving long term organizational objectives. If the objective of the management is concern for people within an organization, managers can use counselling and problem solving skills. Similarly organizations demand productivity of employees in order to achieve goals and attain profitability, managers has to use their time management skills along with other skills. Thus it can be monitored from the above discussion that the personal and professional skills contribute for attaining long term business objectives of an organization.

Task 2: Using the template and given information you are required to develop skills audit that helps in identifying preferred learning styles (AC2.1 and 2.2)

Individuals must be able to identify the skills and various learning styles within ones' self in order to develop potential for learning. Skill audit not only facilitate the individuals and organizations to evaluate their current skills but is also helpful in improving their existing skills and paves the way for the development of additional skills.

There are five stages of personal audit. These stages facilitate the individuals in identifying various skills, and support the individuals in defining the required skills necessary for effective management and leadership practices within or outside the organizations.

#### Stage 1: Identification of Existing Skills and Information level

Employees can jot down the current or existing knowledge about a certain field/process. If he is a manager, he can write down different management skills that are currently present. The job employees' job description can also be reviewed and they can also identify which of the skills are present and which aren't.

#### Stage 2: Identification of Potential skills and Information level

This involves the list of the skills and information requirements which are important in terms of career and job requirements. There might be fifteen to twenty points which can be included in this list.

#### Stage 3: Rating abilities

The next step is to rate both the lists on the scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) describing your current capabilities.

#### Stage 4: Review of the rating score

In this stage, employees might ask their peers, direct supervisors, and managers to review the rating score. In this stage, it is important that the person selected for the review must be highly just and free of any bias while giving their suggestions.

#### Stage 5: Future prospects for developing skills

Employees can analyze the entire information/result and can focus on the areas which are important for his career.

The abovementioned stages of personal skills audit is a great help for strategic managers. By following these stages, they will not only identify the fields/areas where one is effective, but also the areas that require attention of employees. The skills with lesser scores from the reviewers are highlighted and the employee can easily find ways to overcome their weaknesses.

Learning process is necessary in order to process the information provided to a person from the external environment. By identifying the learning styles, individuals/employees can avoid various problematic situations by making smart choices. They will also be successful in their job. They will be able to identify the environment that is suitable for the team building and individuals/employees will be able to work better with peers and other team members. There are different models developed by the practitioners indicating the ways people learn things.

David Kolb's model defines experience as a source of learning. It is important for everyone to identify their learning style in order to improve their information handling and processing skills. Learning is the continuous phenomenon and individuals/employees learn things which gradually shape their behavior and personality. Thus people must pay attention on identifying their learning styles.

Honey and Mumford brought three different areas of learning styles which includes Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic. As we know, different people use different methods of learning that best suits them. However, it can also be a combination of these styles which largely depend on the situation as well.

Below is the explanation of this VAK system.

#### Visual

Visual learners have the habit of taking down notes for them to remember it. They need to see or read through it to memorize things like pictures, graphs, articles, etc.

#### Auditory

Auditory learners usually take the points after they listen to the full audio or conversation. By listening to a source like recorder, class lectures, or topic discussions, they feel that they understand the contents better.

#### Kinaesthetic

These are learners who prefer physical way of learning rather than listening to a lecturer or watching a topic demonstration. They believe that they can understand an idea or situation better if they do it themselves. They are often called as "do-ers".

Honey and Mumford gave specifically four styles of learning which are given below.

#### Activists

These are the people who do not like to be at one place and do some messy work for long hours. They generally find themselves to be more active and they do creative tasks more like changing to new things or moving to another department

## Theorists

These are the people who have the clear purpose or intentions in their mind and they usually seen in to well structure. They generally like to read and understand the data and apply their logic on the subject. They are more like to evaluate the things in any situation.

## Reflectors

Reflectors are people who avoid to do things forcefully. They normally take their own time before taking any decisions. They more overly like to watch the situation and evaluate the result before doing any commitments.

## Pragmatist

Most of the people can be seen like Pragmatist. These people like to be coached before going in to the depth of the topic. They are best in their learning when someone can lead them and guide them for whatever work they are given in any sectors. They generally rely on the feedback and always in need of practical knowledge.

In most of the situations, I do act like theorists where I generally need the strong data from which I can make out the things to finish my work as without it, the work becomes a little too difficult for me. However under some situation where I am not aware about the topic or I have not read or acknowledge about the subject, I do act like a Pragmatist where there is a need of a coaching to give me hints about the topic to be able to give my feedback. For example, my lecturer used to give me knowledge about management but if they tell me to write about management in detail, I may not be able to do as per their expectations because I have not been given the exact data about management to further explain it. Moreover, I also need coaching or guidance from my lecturer to teach me methods of management so that whenever I give them report I can get the feedback.

So in certain circumstances, you can say that I use a combination of Theorists and Pragmatist learning style. By the system of Honey and Mumford, if I point out the VAK then I usually use the method of Visualize as I do remember the things when I do take down notes. But sometimes, there are some topics being discussed that I usually know about so I just use to listen or talk about it which is more comfortable for me as I am speaking most of the time based on experience.

Recent studies have proved that learning helps in improving one's self confidence which further contributes to fulfilling self esteem needs in the Maslow hierarchy. It is important for the people to identify the learning styles because they have positive impact on the personal and professional development of an individual. People can easily process the information and learn things in an effective manner. Thus it can be said that the learning styles contribute for the personal development of an individual.

Task 3: Using the template and given information you are required to develop a PDP (Professional development plan) assesses the (AC 3.1, 3.1 and 3.3).

A professional development plan documents the goals, required skills and competency development and objectives an employee will need to accomplish in order to support continuous improvement and career development. It has to be created by the manager working closely with the employee to identify the necessary skills and resources to support the organization's business needs.

Personal development plan is one of the important tools of professional development that helps employees to assess their skills and abilities. With the help of this plan, they can easily assess their capabilities and core competencies. Their weaknesses are also highlighted in this plan and the employees can easily identify the areas that need more focus and attention. Personal development plan is of great use to the strategic managers as they can easily avail their career opportunities by working on this plan. There is variety of options available with the people in order to work on these plans. They can use several worksheets that track the routine activities of the people. Thus it can be said that by recording the detailed routine activities, individual can monitor how much time is spent on each activity and by keen analysis, he/she can work out which of the activities can be added or eliminated from the routine in order to get more fruitful results. Personal development plan clarifies the ways and choices to the individual which are source of benefit or threat for accomplishing certain task. The plan should show continuous improvement in the personality of individuals. This is because of the fact that if the development plan is showing progress then the overall objective of developing various skills would be achieved. Otherwise, it would be of no use.

In order to evaluate the professional profile in strategic perspectives, personal development portfolio plays very important role. This portfolio not only describes evidence of individual's skills and expertise, but facilitates in developing effective strategies, which are required in improvement of these skills. It can be said that it is a form of working document which helps the individual throughout the career. Learning log is one of the important tools that determine the details of what the individual has learned, what skills were developed and how skills can be improved further.

Below is an example of a self assessment test that we can use to create a PDP

Skill Area

Poor

Good-2

Very good-3

Excellent-4

Communication

Able to express views verbally or written

Confident speaking in front of a group

Prepare, plan and deliver a presentation

Clear and Accurate

Listening Skills

Always able to express the patience to listen the Speaker

Able to understand the message of the Speaker

Able to evaluate the conclusion of the communication through any sources like Audio

Flexibility

A ability to work on flexible time

Adaptability to adjust to any situations or conditions

To show the willingness towards team to be a flexible

Computing

Able to use a word processing software package to produce assignments

Health and safety issues around the use of computers

Confident in researching topics of study using the internet

Use a variety of different computer software (e.g. Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access)

## Self Management

Able to identify personal goals

Good judgement on what the strengths and areas for development are

Able to identify opportunities for learning outside the course, e.g. clubs, societies, employment

Able to plan for personal development

From the above assessment test, I was able to find out my strengths and weaknesses. Some of them are as follows:

Able to express views verbally or written

I can express my own views in a very good manner for the verbal and written. I have been invited as a speaker in various seminars as well.

Confident speaking in front of a group

I can speak fluently in front of people to present things/discussions in front of people with different professional levels like heads or general managers

Prepare, plan and deliver a presentation

I have excellent skills in this area as I've been doing this as part of my job.

To make this skill excellent I can practice by myself to give a presentation or in my class I can always take a part to give the presentations.

Always able to express the patience to listen the Speaker

As a department head, it is a must that I have these skills in order to maintain a good relationship within my department and other departments too.

Ability to work on flexible time

To make this skill very good I can always make the time schedule and understand the situations so as to act accordingly to the demands of my job

Adaptability to adjust to any situations or conditions

To make this skill excellent I can always use my sense of responsibility towards the condition and evaluate the seriousness to avoid any inconvenience

Continuous professional development is important for both the organization and the individuals. This is because change is the continuous process that has been occurring in the job environment as well as in businesses. Trained and skillful workforce is the requirement of every organization and the companies appreciate those employees which are dedicated towards achieving organizational goals. For this reason, it is important for the people who want to work in well reputed organizations to focus on continuous professional development plans, which not only facilitate them for achieving their personal objectives of self esteem, but will facilitate the organizations as well.