



DEVELOPING A PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP)

Why have a personal development plan

As the world of work and leisure is changing so fast many people are finding that the role they thought they had for life now only last a few years or even a few months. Even where the job does last for life – like parenting there is a need to keep up to date with changes in your customer's needs and the environment. Personal development plans are a way of capturing the things you need to do in order to grow and learn either in your current role or a new one.

Who should write the PDP

In some organisations the manager takes the lead in writing the PDP. However if the PDP is to be of real benefit it needs to be led by the individual helped by a guide. Your guide might be a manager at work, a good friend or a professional careers advisor. Personal Development Plans work best if you trust your guide and feel you can be open with them.

How do I build my PDP

While many people focus their personal development plans on their current role or job there is a strong benefit it taking a more holistic approach. By first creating or updating your Curriculum Vitae you can build a picture of yourself in both work and leisure as a starting point for your PDP.

What do my guide and I do next

Building up a picture

The next step is for the guide to take you through a series of questions. They will help you to build up a picture of your likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.

The following questions are likely to be most helpful

Describe your previous jobs (paid or unpaid)

What did you like best about each of them?

What did you like least?

What did you learn from each of them?

Describe your current job/ role

What do you like best about it?

What do you like least?

What do you find easy?

What do you find hard?

What do you find exciting about your role in the future (opportunities)?

What worries you about your role in the future (threats)?



While this discussion is taking place it is a good idea for you and your guide to write down some notes under the headings of:

Likes	Dislikes	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats

Creating a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis

Strengths and weaknesses are those skills and qualities within us that help and hinder us when we try to achieve things. Strengths inappropriately applied can become weaknesses and weaknesses when understood and developed can become strengths Opportunities and threats are those things external to us which create excitement or fear in us. With a positive attitude many threats can be turned into opportunities while a negative frame of mind can turn opportunities into threats

A SWOT analysis is a tool often used by consultants to analyse the state and prospects of a business. This tool can also be applied to individuals as a means of identifying activities for a personal development plan.

The SWOT analysis is simply a way of structuring your ideas from your earlier discussion into a table:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Looking at this table shows those things you feel positive about on the left and those things you feel negative about on the right.

Now you and your guide need to consider

*Which of your weaknesses is having the most negative impact on your current role
Which will inhibit you most from progressing in the future?
Who/ Where can you ask for help in addressing these weaknesses (manager, training manager, consultant, person you respect, friends),
When are you going to take the first step in asking for that help and advice?
How are you going to review your progress?*

*Which of the threats are you most worried about
Who/ Where can you get more information from
What could you do to reduce the threat or turn it into an opportunity
Who do you know who had been in this situation before that can advise you?
When are you going to take the first step in asking for that help and advice?
How are you going to review your progress?.*



You are now ready to write your Personal Development Plan
GOOD LUCK

A sample Personal Development Plan

What am I trying to achieve	What internal weakness is standing in the way	What external threat is worrying me	Who/ Where can I go to for help	When Am I going to ask for help	How will I review progress
Meet increasing demands from customers	Time Management	Competition.	A project manager. A working mother. A training course.	Meeting arranged for next Monday with project manager. Email request for training course sent	Discuss with my guide at least every three months
Managing a complex team	Confidence experience	Redundancy	An experienced manager to act as coach. The internet or a training manager for details on courses	This Friday afternoon	Discuss with my guide at least every three months
Promotion or new job	Confidence Knowledge of what is wanted	Other applicants	People who have done this type of role before.	After drafting but before completing the application forms.	Discuss results of applications with my guide after each interview or at least every three months

© Authentic Leadership Associates Ltd 2009. This document or parts of it may be copied free of charge provided that this box is reproduced with each copy and copies are not sold.

Author: Isabelle Iny is an organisation development consultant with particular expertise in personal and career and development. Isabelle@authenticleadership.org.uk