

Good example of essay on employability and developing the self

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Employability and Developing the Self

In the current times, college and university graduates experience a shortcut of employment opportunities, which, according to labor market analysts is generated by both the economic condition but also by the lack of preparedness of the graduates for the available positions (Rao, 2010; Yorke, 2004). The preparedness for getting an employment, securing it and moving ahead to new employments based on deployed skills implies possessing a set of skills, attributes or personal competences, which define the employability (Perozzi, 2009; Yorke, 2004).

Rao (2010) suggests that the employability reflects the graduates' soft skills, rather than their hard skills, observing that most of the times people are hired for their technical skills and fired for the lack of the non-technical skills. The soft skills, such as the communication abilities, the desired persona, leadership, motivation, presentation skills, time management, among others are considered people skills and according to Rao (2010) they are contributing to one's employability potential. Gravells (2010) indicates that personal traits such as the reliability and honesty are attributes of the employability, while the technical, hard skills are considered attributes of the employment skills. Nonetheless, the author acknowledges the existence of four categories of employability skills:

- Knowledge, comprising information about subject matter;
- Skills, referring to adaptability, organizing, planning, trustworthiness, resilience;
- Attitudes, including job enthusiasm or initiative, integrity or common sense;

- Behavior, describing time management, in-team collaboration, self-determination, customer service or problem solving (Gravells, 2010).

Besides knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior, employability is also perceived as “ a set of achievements which constitute a necessary but not sufficient condition for the gaining of employment” (Yorke, 2004, p. 2).

My job interest is to pursue Marketing roles, with the objective of landing a Marketing Manager role. My career plan is to own my own business one day. For fulfilling this end I am aware of the fact that I need to develop my set of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, for securing achievements that will allow me to move on the desired path.

However, until achieving these hard skills specific to marketing industry professionals, I need to focus on the employability skills as they are required in the advertised jobs for the graduate students. The roles that address the graduates who are interested in pursuing a career in Marketing imply possessing specific soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, work ethic, desirable persona, customer focus, core skills or leadership (Heffernan, Feng, Angell & Fang, n. d., p. 1). These soft skills comprise abilities, attitudes and behavior towards the job (problem solving, core skills, work ethic), towards the customers (desirable persona, customer focus) and towards the colleagues and employers (communication, leadership).

Regarding the graduates' employability skills as required by recruiters, Precision Consultancy (2007) states that regardless of the industry, most employers require the same employability skills, but customized on the specific of their industry. As such, as the study observes, communication

skills are required in various fields, such as nursing, marketing, computing, etc., but the oral communication skills need to be applied and developed differently in all these fields (Precision Consultancy, 2007).

Considering the nature of the marketing roles, which require constant inter-relations with customers, third parties and consultations with coordinators and colleagues within team buildings, brainstorming and other activities, a significant component of employability is the interpersonal understanding (Hager and Holland, 2006).

Marketing roles for graduates also require a proactive personality, eagerness to take initiative and ownership of projects and personal ideas, as the Sainsbury's - the 2015 Graduate Programme indicates (The Guardian, n. d.). Creativity, business communication skills and diplomatic negotiation abilities and persuasiveness are required from the graduate candidates for Account Manager positions (Graduate Jobs, n. d.).

Studying the available roles and positions in Marketing field, I observed that there are significant differences in requirements from one role to another. There are jobs more focused on research, wherein I consider that self-determination and curiosity are employability skills required, while other Marketing roles are focused more on events, wherein an outgoing personality and negotiation abilities are needed. Graduate Jobs (n. d.) indicates that there are different types of marketing activities, describing the need for marketing of our nowadays society. There are roles wherein the traditional forms of Marketing prevail, or on the contrary, wherein social media focus is the key, there are also Marketing roles centered on brand management, market research (Graduate Jobs, n. d.), and I might add Public

Relations, sales or advertising.

All these sub-functions of Marketing require a different set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior from the graduate candidates and depending on the chosen path, the employed individuals will develop distinctly, gaining specific expertise in the chosen area.

The graduate students are challenged by a varied set of required skills, personal attributes, attitudes and behavior towards an entry-level Marketing role. However, in order to know if one can cope with such challenges, graduates need to understand if their personality matches the job descriptions for the roles for which they apply. One way to do this is by applying their self-awareness tools. Such self-awareness tools that I use are the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and John Holland's Career Theory. These tools give me a straight visibility of where I stand now in terms of personality traits and skills and inform me about what I need to change or improve for matching the desired Marketing roles (Capuzzi and Gross, 2013).

Evaluating myself using the MBTI test, I am an introverted personality, energized by in-depth personal meditation and reflection, guided by practical senses, balancing my strong judging, organized decision making process with personal values attributed to the Feeling value.

MBTI can be used for testing one's employability skills, by assigning different cognitive strengths to each personality indicator that characterizes individuals (Choong and Britton, 2007). Because I am more introverted than extroverted, I am more attracted by my internal thinking processes than by external ones, which means that the creativity and my unique thinking

reasoning pattern weight more than the team work and the outgoing personality. According to this self-evaluation, I do not possess the employability skills for working in events, as I do not have a typical outgoing personality. However, I am a good communicator, effectively presenting my ideas and my arguments, although I like to avoid hearing my voice too much when I do not have something interesting, or useful to communicate. My introverted personality indicates that I am inclined towards the creative, inspirational and analytical part of the business, which are qualities of a visionary leader and fundamental to career growth (Chen and Sun, 2013; Patton and McMahon, 2014).

John Holland's Career Theory holds that individuals need to find working environments that match their personality traits (Fabricant, Miller and Stark, 2013). According to Holland's Career Theory, I am Realistic and Artistic, which means I am practical, valuing the tangible results, but also creative, unconventional, and innovative (Fabricant, Miller and Stark, 2013). From this perspective, I am not very much inclined towards the full-time office roles that value routine activities and conformity. Marketing fits this profile if it implies consistent fieldwork and original and unconventional, non-routine activities. However, people also consider me to be conventional, which, according to Holland's career hexagon, is inconsistent with the artistic type. However, people who know me also see me as conventional, as I am focused on having my own order, having business competencies (Fabricant, Miller and Stark, 2013). The inconsistency between artistic and conventional is an advantage for me, because I mingle the innovation with the business focus, adding realistic sense for achieving tangible results, which makes me suited

for managing my own business.

The sensing component of my personality traits indicates that I rely my work on known data. Checking statistics and having access to information help allow me an informed perspective on the faced problems, making me an effective problem solver. Problem solving is a desired employability skill for graduates focusing on marketing roles (Heffernan et al., n. d.). The fact that I also incorporate the Feeling component of MBTI test implies that I rely on personal values when I make decisions, making me a flexible individual. Flexibility is an employability skills required in many industries, including marketing, as it helps individuals to continually develop and grow in the targeted direction (Walden and Thoms, 2007).

Planning and organizing are also significant aspects required from graduates for being prepared to enter employment, representing a skill needed in the organizational activities but also in dealing with customers, for accurately and effectively managing their requests (Hager and Holland, 2006).

At this moment, considering my personality traits and attributes, I possess employability skills for market research, social media marketing or brand management. I am more driven by the internal, analytical processes, focusing on my personal values, feelings and known facts for guiding my activities. I am aware, however, that I need to work on improving specific skills to become more employable. For becoming more employable, I need to develop a plan for enhancing my employability skills required for the marketing roles. The plan includes the following actions:

(1) Identifying in two months at least three employability skills that I need to improve;

(2) Depicting how employers expect graduates to apply them for the marketing roles by investigating the available Marketing roles for graduates published in the course of three months;

(3) Finding at least three examples of how the skills need to be manifested at work by working as an intern within Marketing agencies for at six three months;

(4) Practicing them in various contexts for improving the required skills, one year before applying to Marketing roles for graduates.

Therefore, the first step of this four actions planning is to identify the areas wherein I lack or possess poor employability skills. Team work and communications are the main areas wherein I lack specific employability skills required for most marketing roles. Because the roles specific to Marketing are dynamic and require “ initiative and enterprise” (Heffernan et al., n. d., p. 3), I also need to improve my initiative skills.

Most graduates and candidates for available jobs in the labor market indicate that they have great communication skills. However, communication skills are very complex and imply mastering diversified subset of skills. University of Bolton (2013) indicates the required communication skills for being considered employable: presenting, motivating and encouraging, questioning, interacting, articulating, listening, accepting and giving criticism, persuading, negotiating, using body language, arguing and adapting information for different audiences.

For improving my presentation skills I need to engage in more public speaking. Writing and structuring documents also represents a form of presenting, which I should explore through writing professional assignments

across the academic year and creating Marketing presentations and strategies within my internship program. Motivating and encouraging others is an area that I need to focus heavily, by undertaking the peer mentoring role at school (University of Bolton, 2013), which will get me closer to individuals who need guidance. Such role would increase my empathy skills (France, Weikel and Kish, 2006), teaching me to better sense and interpret people's needs from their body language. It would also improve my interaction, questioning and active listening potential. Acting for somebody, supporting a cause, and being a group's representative would make me more persuasive, allowing me to explore my argumentative skills by adjusting the shared information to distinct audiences and by using body language to better express my ideas. Rao (2010) recommends observing great speakers for correcting the body language and adjusting it to each individual's personality and culture. I will also need to engage with the experienced Marketing professionals from the company where I will serve as an intern, taking them as role-models for improving my communication skills in terms of presentation skills, interaction, motivation and encouragement or body language. Scholars also suggests to rehearse the use of body language by speaking in front of a mirror and correct the inaccuracies of body expression (Bovee, 2003; Rao, 2010).

For enhancing my team work skills, I need to improve my collaboration and interaction with my peers and to work with others for reaching a goal (University of Bolton). There are significant aspects that I need to consider for improving my team working abilities. I must share my ideas with others and value others' thoughts, supporting and respecting them, while

developing interaction rapport with them. Also, I need to be flexible and to understand my own role in a team, while being empathic about the cultural differences (University of Bolton, 2013). For succeeding in applying these employability skills as employers require them from the graduates that want to work in Marketing, I need to consider real examples of exerting them. Volunteering projects, group activities, outdoor team activities, committee work are such examples of real life situations where I could manifest these skills (University of Bolton, 2013). My internship experience can be valuable in this sense, as I can exercise sharing my ideas with colleagues within brainstorming sessions. One condition for making me more proactive about sharing my ideas is that I should do it in a non-conventional manner and in a non-routine environment. Practicing these skills in any other situation, including in the family or friends' setting, but also in-class or at-work would make me be more comfortable with implementing them when applying for marketing roles.

For enhancing my initiative skills, I must share my ideas and take responsibility for their implementation, while also assisting others and challenging perceptions (University of Bolton). Examples of how I could enhance these personal attributes include volunteering to lead projects and committing to oneself that no matter what, the targeted purpose will be attained (Fast Company, "Intensifying Your Initiative"). Similarly, taking initiatives within my internship program by requiring specific training programs for improving my working capacities would be a plus for my employability skills. The fourth step of my plan of enhancing my employability skills implies rehearsing my initiative skills in various

situations. In a classroom situation, I can propose various activities that I would offer to coordinate. I need to also volunteer in extra-curricular activities, wherein I will recommend actions, taking responsibility and accountability for their completion. Within my internship program, I can have the initiative of organizing an outdoor working day, which would fit my personality and would enhance my employability skills.

- (1) Identifying in less than one week at least three employability skills that I need to improve;
- (2) Depicting how employers expect graduates to apply them for the marketing roles by investigating the available Marketing roles for graduates published in the recent week;
- (3) Finding at least three examples of how the skills need to be manifested at work;
- (4) Practicing them in various contexts for improving the required skills, at least one month before applying to marketing roles for graduates.

These actions respond to SMART principles, as they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (Martin, 2006). They are specific, as they all indicate what I need to do gradually for improving my employability skills: identifying the skills that need improvements, how employers expect their employees to exert them, finding examples of applying them at work and practicing them until I appropriate them. They are measurable, as I mention the volume or the quantity required for each action: identifying at least three employability skills that need improvement, analyzing the available Marketing roles for graduates, finding at least three examples of how they are applied at work and practicing the skills in various contexts.

They are achievable and realistic, because I can manage and monitor them. Not lastly, they are time bound, as there are specific deadlines in which I need to fit each action for improving my employability skills.

The current labor market is becoming more competitive every day, as we advance in the global economy, with people from all around the world applying for the same positions. As future graduate I am competing against other graduates, but also against experienced individuals. For being able to compete in this environment when applying to Marketing roles, I need to implement this plan, for developing my employability skills, which will be my main competitive advantage. In the future, possessing outstanding employability skills but also a visionary sense, I will be able to open my own business, sustaining it with my analytical skills, my innovative thinking and my realistic personality.

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Appendix

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