

Action Plan.

LT: By 31st May I will have developed a simple yet effective contacts database utilising and enhancing my IT skills.

Learning Target	Performance Indicators (P.I.)	How do you plan to achieve this target?	Deadline for completion of key actions	Resources required?	Risk Management Plan
<p>Take care to write this as a <u>specific target</u>.</p> <p><u>Avoid</u> merely stating or describing the work based task you will complete. Instead, focus on the skill or competence you will need to achieve the target.</p>	<p>What does it take to be 'good' at this skill?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. State the criteria you will need to meet to achieve a high standard of performance. ii. What published information sources will you use to set the standard(s) required? iii. What evidence might you present to show that you achieved the standard(s)? 	<p>What will you DO to achieve the learning targets to the standard you have set yourself?</p> <p>Break the task down into steps and indicate the sequence in which you will complete them.</p>	<p>(Check that the proposed deadline is feasible)</p> <p>Take care to ensure that the deadlines for completion of the 3 targets <u>DO NOT</u> all fall in the final week of the placement.</p>	<p>What resources will you require (e.g. technical equipment, materials, estimated hours of your time needed for training by your manager etc.)</p> <p>How might you acquire these resources?</p>	<p>What factors might delay and/or prevent you from achieving the target?</p> <p>How can you try to minimise the risk of this happening?</p>
<p>By 31st May I will have developed a simple yet effective contacts database utilising and enhancing my IT skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The database has correct information in it and is easy to use. ii. Manuals about making databases. Online information. iii. The database. Confirmation that it can be used from the staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate the information that will be included. • Ask the secretary if it is up-to-date. • Read about creating databases, and practise using the software • Create the database, entering all the contacts information • Test it • Train the staff in how to use it 	<p>First week</p> <p>First week</p> <p>Second week</p> <p>Third week</p> <p>Fourth week</p>	<p>The contact information they have.</p> <p>Time of the secretary to explain it to me.</p> <p>Computer has Access installed.</p> <p>Access to Internet and relevant manuals</p> <p>Availability of staff to be trained.</p>	<p>Some information might be out of date but the secretary doesn't tell me (she is unaware that it is, or she rushes in giving me the information).</p> <p>My pace is too slow because I find the software hard to learn.</p> <p>Not enough time to train the staff before placement finishes.</p> <p>Build in time to check the information.</p> <p>Practise for longer and keep the format simple.</p> <p>Ask manager to set time for training staff during my last week.</p>

Critically Reflective Analysis

Learning target : By 31st May I will have developed a simple yet effective contacts database utilising and enhancing my IT skills.

Description

Part of my role was to provide cover for the Secretary whilst they were away from the desk; this work included answering the telephone, checking in the mail and providing the personal details of various contacts to the Manager. These 200 or so contact details were held in a rather old and well used Address Book. I mentioned to the Secretary that it might be a good idea to input the data on to a database. This was agreed and I was told that it would be my responsibility to undertake this task. However, other than playing on my console and using MS Word and a bit of MS Excel to write my assignments my computer or IT skills were somewhat lacking.

Critical Analysis

I initially designed a simple spreadsheet using 'title', 'forename', 'street', 'town' 'county', 'postcode', 'tel' and 'email' as the column headings. An example is attached as Appendix A. But the spreadsheet was too big and not easy to view. The secretary commented that it 'looked too busy' and that staff 'did not have the time to search through all that stuff.' Moreover, both Wikipedia (nd) and Nash, Jelen, Jones, & Urtis (2012) argue that a spreadsheet is primarily for manipulating numeric data and calculations; where as Stephen (2012) (Pg 2) describes a database as "a collection of data, stored in an organised way." citing examples of databases which were similar to the contacts list. I therefore decided that I would need to re-design the database using MS Access.

Having designed the spreadsheet I had the basis of a table for use in MS Access, but I was still concerned about the views of colleagues and conscious that I had to take account of the, Taylor (2011) (Pg 41) "user's data model" and that "Human relations is an important part of the job". A table would look very similar to a spreadsheet.

MS Access allows user to design simple forms for the purposes of entering, amending and viewing data, the 'autoform' feature greatly assists in this process; examples of forms that I designed both using 'autoform' and manually are included in Appendix B. These designs were discussed with the Secretary and Boss both of whom were happy with the simplest looking form being created by 'autoform'. I had spent a considerable amount of time designing different forms and was disheartened that they had chosen the simplest and, in my view, less attractive; Taylor (2011) (Pg 292) states that in building a web based database "Web page visitors are generally not engaged by ... static screens.". Having read this I wanted to design a database that not only did the job but looked good. I suppose that having been used to an Address Book any frills were deemed unnecessary by the users, Barker & Cole (2007) (Pg 48.) argue " your objective is to deliver a project with your customers accepting that what you've supplied is fit for its intended purpose." In this instance rather than attempting to persuade the Secretary that my fancy designs were better I have had to accept that the database is "fit for its intended purpose".

Once the database had been designed I then needed to spend some time inputting the current contact details from the Address Book and demonstrating to the Secretary how to use the database.

Conclusions

I feel that I had achieved my learning target in that I was able to not only design the database but also having not used MS Access before I learnt the necessary IT skills needed to fulfil the job. However, it occurs to me that other learning also took place, I now have a better appreciation of the appropriate use of various IT applications, e.g. when to use a spreadsheet and what it is primarily used for and when not to use a spreadsheet.

Whilst unintentional, I have also learnt about dealing with other people in the workplace and the importance of gaining others views regarding tasks to be done before setting off on my own. I also now have a better appreciation of ensuring that the end result of a task is not only fit for purpose but has the necessary agreement or 'buy-in' from other staff. If the Secretary had not liked the database then it is unlikely that it would be used.

However, looking back I realise that whilst I had had to concede to the wishes of the staff, I had, in effect, orchestrated a cultural change within the organisation by facilitating a change from the Address Book to a database. Russell-Jones (2011) states that (Pg 58) "To change an organisation you must change the people, their beliefs and attitudes and their ways of working." It occurs to me that not only had I changed the Secretary's way of working but I had to change my own beliefs and attitudes in order to get the job done; a necessary skill in any workplace.

Future Actions

Having had this experience and learnt about MS Access I will use this application in the future to assist where possible in my studies and my personal life. I intend to set up my own contacts database, frills and all, and also try to set up a database to catalogue my DVDs, CDs and Games. However, I feel that I will need some more experience and will contact Learning Support to see if they can help.

I am now interested in the way that people behave in organisations and will undertake some further reading around the subject of staff relations and behaviour in organisations. This will further inform my own behaviour in the workplace both in my current part-time job and full-time work following completion of my course. Whilst not losing enthusiasm for tasks that I am given I will temper my own attitude to ensure that others agree with my actions so that I do not waste time or effort in producing something that will not be used.

I could have written a short guide explaining how to using the database for staff who are unfamiliar with databases and need guidance in using the one I developed. I plan produce one this week.

References

- Barker, S., & Cole, R. (2007). *Brilliant Project Management: What the Best Project Managers Know, Say And Do*: Pearson Prentice Hall Business.
- Nash, T., Jelen, B., Jones, K., and Urtis, T. (2012). *Don't Fear the Spreadsheet: A Beginner's Guide to Overcoming Excel's Frustrations*: Chicago Review Press.
- Russell-Jones, N. (2011). *Managing Change Pocketbook: Management Pocketbooks*.
- Stephen, M. (2012). *Databases with Access*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis.

Taylor, A. G. (2011). Database Development For Dummies: Wiley.

Wikipedia. (nd). Spreadsheet Retrieved Jan 24, 2013, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spreadsheet>

Personal and Professional Development Plan

Introduction

My experience on placement made me realise that people's behaviour and attitudes have a significant effect on how an organisation operates, so I started to read more about this and came to realise I have much to learn about organisational culture and psychology. I would like to find out more by studying psychology part-time while working. My research could focus on this element of psychology – if possible in the organisation I work in. My PDP considers gaining a place on the course, securing a part-time job, and gaining further experience through securing voluntary work in an organisation like the Samaritans. (100 words).

Personal or professional development goal.	Reasons for choosing this goal? Why is this a priority for you?	What <u>actions</u> will you take to achieve this goal?	What resources will you need to achieve your goal?	Proposed timescale or deadlines for completion of actions and achievement of goal?
Gain a place on MSc in Psychology at University of Chester	<p>Recognised qualification in a subject of interest. Relevant to many jobs, including Human Resource Management, which I am interested in.</p> <p>As well as gaining knowledge from the modules, I will also be able to research an aspect of interest to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first date I could begin this course is October 2014, and I can apply up until March so before then I will aim to have begun my voluntary work as this will help my application. Obtain the application form and begin to record relevant experiences and qualifications that I might include in the final application Check for any changes to the course details throughout the year: http://www.chester.ac.uk/postgraduate/psychology-conversion-part-time Read through all the relevant advice and information available through Careers and Employability (careers@chester.ac.uk) and make an appointment to see a careers advisor, to ensure I am gathering all the experiences and evidence I need, and to ensure my application is as good as possible. 	<p>Contact with voluntary organisation (see Goal 2)</p> <p>Access to computer, printer and data stick to save my work.</p> <p>Access as above</p> <p>As above</p>	<p>October 2013 onwards</p> <p>October 2013 onwards</p> <p>As above</p> <p>As above</p>

	me, find out about it through application in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work consistently on my studies, aiming to achieve at least a 2:2 as this is the minimum requirement for entry on the course. • Maintain (and possibly increase during vacations) paid work. • Open savings account to save money for fees, which will be £5 310 if I can pay the total at once, less discount for being a university of Chester student: http://www.chester.ac.uk/sites/files/chester/Indicative%20Postgrad%20fees%202013-14_7Jan2013.pdf 	Access to library, computer, printer, data stick, lectures and tutors	As above
			Maintain part-time job	As above
			Regular pay to deposit (use part of wages)	July 2013 onwards

298 words for table

Database Example

Student:	WBL Tutor:
Placement:	

SECTION 1: STUDENT FEEDBACK

Please include a comment under each of the headings below.

Task 1 and 2**Learning Targets and Action Plan.**

Your Learning Target is reasonably clear, although it could be more detailed. For example, how much time did you expect to need for training? Your risk management plan is good as far as it goes, but the events that actually happened indicate that it's important to plan time and an approach to work with users on their needs and ideas, as well as using your own, as otherwise there is a risk of either running out of time, or producing something that is not used.

Use of framework, quality of observations, critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation in relation to approach and performance.

You use the framework effectively to help you move on from description and analysis to taking an overview and planning for your future development. In your analysis you indicate some of the technical elements you needed to consider and also some of the difficulties one can encounter when introducing a new facility that needs to meet the users' requirements and preferences. I feel you learned much from this experience, but could have stated this more clearly. It's clear that you felt the staff were being limited in their selection and that much of your learning and development, which enabled you to show them more sophisticated options, was wasted. It would have been good to stand back from this and to consider the reasons for these different perspectives. For example, were you making assumptions about what the best options should be? Your reading could have helped you with this point more thoroughly than it did. (I think you also use some reading which does not support your argument well – for example I'm not sure how relevant reference to web page design is when you are considering the development of a database). Having agreed to go with their preference, what was their view of the finished product and what did that make you think about how to meet users' needs? Despite these weaknesses, in your conclusions and future actions you do stand back and make relevant points as you look ahead to the future. It is these sections that convince me that you have developed your thinking beyond simply the technical elements to the wider, significant issues.

Proposed future actions to enhance performance.

Relevant, insightful and useful actions which should support significant further learning and development.

Use of relevant published or other valid sources of information to justify student's approach and/or inform conclusions.

You have used a fairly wide range of literature, and used much of it well (although see my point above about the reference to web page design). You could have used some references in more detail, in a more detailed analysis (perhaps, for example, Barker and Cole). Despite you plan to use information about software from manuals or online information, you don't seem to have done so.

Evidence used to support claims of attainment of learning targets.

Relevant evidence included and clearly cross-referenced although you might have included some written feedback from your supervisors. You could also have included some evidence of the final database you produced.

Written Expression.

Generally clear, although there are occasional errors with punctuation. There is a need to ensure you use appropriate style throughout and avoid being too informal (for example, 'Manager' would be more formal than 'Boss').

Assessment task 1 and 2 58%

Task 3 Personal Development Plan.**Goals**

Clear, and aspirational to some extent (in that it requires you to gain a 2:2 or higher, along with , I assume, meeting other requirements)

Reasons for selecting the goals

You do explain your reasons for choosing this goal. However, I wonder how strong your motivation is. Beware of being influenced unduly by events on placement – there could be many other perspectives on the situation you write about in your essay, and each

of those could perhaps prompt your interest in different ways. Nevertheless, you refer to reading you have done, so I trust that this goal has been arrived at through much thought.

Actions to achieve goal

A good range of actions which will support your goal well. Some research already undertaken – this could be taken further (e.g. reading more widely about careers where psychology might be relevant). Interesting range – particularly your plans for voluntary work.

Resources

Most specified. Perhaps specific costs could be mentioned (particularly those for your course – how much will you have to pay initially and subsequently, I imagine you will have had to pay something towards the course before the end of next academic year).

Deadlines

Specified for all actions.

Assessment task 3 58%

Overall

I think you have learned much from this experience – good luck with your plans for further learning and development.

Key suggestions for your development

- Allow yourself time to stand back from the detail of an assignment to ensure you have developed a clear, flowing argument, with all your points both fully explored and links between them made clear.
- Check your draft work regarding style, ensuring it is sufficiently formal.

SECTION 2: RESULTS AND MODERATION

Total Mark for written assignment [%] (to be inserted by WBL Tutor)

58%