Self Awareness and Personal Development
ABP Intermediate Award
I hear and I **Forget**

I see and I **Remember**

I do and I **Understand**

“**Confucius**”

Chinese philosopher & reformer (551 BC - 479 BC)
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SKILLS COURSEWARE

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# SELF AWARENESS AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The dramatic increase in personal trainers and coaching over the last few years, particularly in senior management teams, has highlighted the importance of the personal development of each person, rather than a generic training for all. Before it is possible to benefit fully from any personal development it is recognised now that a good basic understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses is required. Thus this course book gives an introduction first to what is meant by self awareness and then goes on to consider how best to go about personal development.

Developing your own particular life goals and considering how you might achieve these goals is looked at in section one of the book as you stand a much greater chance of achieving your goals if you are sure about what they are. If you can align your personal goals with those of the organisation you work for then you are likely to be appreciated more at work. If you can also do this with a positive attitude, with assertiveness and also be looking at ways to continually improve then you are likely to have very good career prospects at work. After considering these points the course book goes on to look at how you can best sell promotions and ideas in a trustworthy and respected way. Indeed the final section of the book looks more closely at the importance of building effective and trusted business relationships.
Module Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this module students will be able to:

L1 – appreciate what is understood by self awareness and personal development
L2 - understand the benefits of continual self improvement
L3 – identify ways in which you can develop a positive attitude and assertiveness
L4 – be confident in selling promotions and ideas
L5 – understand how to build more effective business relationships

Module design

The module is subdivided into 5 sections. Each of these five sections deals in greater depth with one of the overall module's learning outcomes, L1 to L5 listed above. Thus Section 1 corresponds to L1, Section 2 to L2, and so on. The following table provides a brief description of each section in the Self Awareness and Personal Development module.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Title</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Covered in this Section</th>
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| **Section 1:** Understanding Self Awareness & Personal Development | • Appreciate what is understood by self awareness and personal development  
• Understand that personal development is an ongoing requirement  
• Recognise your current personal development needs  
• Developing your own mission and vision statements |
| **Section 2:** Self Improvement | • Appreciate your particular strengths and weaknesses  
• Be aware of the techniques available to address strengths and weakness  
• Be aware of the ways in which you can positively affect self improvement  
• Appreciate the importance of getting relevant feedback as part of your on-going self improvement |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Title</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Covered in this Section</th>
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| Section 3: Positive Attitude and Awareness| • Understand the key importance of having a positive attitude  
• Appreciate the benefits of coaching  
• Be aware of techniques that can aid motivation and encourage performance  
• Creating a motivated team  |
| Section 4: Selling Techniques             | • Be able to develop a positive sales attitude  
• Understand the importance of first contact strategies  
• An ability to select the most suitable sales negotiating techniques  
• Be aware of effective and appropriate sales technology  |
| Section 5: Building Effective Business Relationships | • Appreciate the importance of having effective business relationships  
• Aligning your personal development needs with your business’s requirements  
• Understand how to establish and maintain relationships  
• Building a reputation for integrity and trust |
Learning & Teaching Methods: A suitable mix of lectures, tutorials, workshops, case studies, videos and hands on practical exercises. The module has 20 hours of formal contact teaching.

Assessment Type & Weighting: The module will be assessed by a formal examination of 1 hour duration.

How to get the most from this booklet

You will gain more benefit when studying this booklet if you stop and reflect at the end of each section. This module contains 5 sections and you should look back at the learning outcomes for each section as you complete the section and ensure that you are comfortable with each learning outcome. If you are not sure about one of the learning outcomes, or any aspect of that section then look back at the associated tutorial notes and exercises you have done in class.

Also don’t forget that this is YOUR booklet, so make notes in it as you go along that will help your understanding as you are learning. Remember that learning is an active exercise and you need to engage fully with the text, it is not the same as casual reading.

Finally, we hope you enjoy this booklet and get as much pleasure in studying aspects of business as we do!
Section 1
Understanding Self Awareness & Personal Development

Learning Outcomes

The Learning Outcomes of this section are to:

- Appreciate what is understood by self awareness and personal development
- Understand that personal development is an ongoing requirement
- Recognise your current personal development needs
- Developing your own mission and vision statements
Introduction

This first section of the course book sets out what we understood as self awareness and personal development. Being aware of your strengths and weaknesses is an important step in understanding what your current personal development needs actually are. Many businesses are often criticised for not having a strategy but in fact most people do not have a personal strategy. For many of us we simply let life develop around us and take opportunities as they arise. However if you can master the discipline of developing your own life goals and look carefully at how you might achieve your aims you stand a much greater chance of achieving them.
What is understood by self awareness and personal development?

Self awareness is about understanding yourself in a way that allows you to understand who you really are and why you do things in the way that you do. By developing your self awareness you can gain control over yourself in certain situations. For example, from experience Adel, a line manager, knows that he has a quick temper when dealing with people in stressful situations. Adel is in charge of managing a group of employees who must reach specific numbers of achievement by a certain date. When he realises that his employees are not going to reach the specific number he takes some time, away from his employees, and collects his thoughts. Adel then schedules a meeting with the team to discuss what went wrong and how things could be improved upon. Because Adel is aware of his quick temper in stressful situations, he is able to successfully manage his emotions and team through specific steps.

Being self aware requires reflection and reflection requires you to think about yourself with regard to your actions, feelings, interactions, and thoughts. Reflection can be undertaken by yourself or with other people. Often times, people naturally reflect when things go wrong. We discuss or think about why it went wrong and what could have been done differently to change what went wrong. It is good practice to reflect when things go wrong but it is also good practice to reflect when things turn out well, or even better than expected.
There is a lot to learn about oneself in good and bad times through reflection. Through reflection we can understand ourselves better and this could allow an individual to:

- Gain more control and make better decisions
- Be more flexible and confident in our approach
- Help ourselves deal with challenges in a more positive and less anxious way
- Interact better, communicate more effectively, and understand our relationships with others more fully
- Reduce our stress levels and get more out of life

Therefore it could be understood that self-awareness can lead to personal development as an individual has identified their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats through reflection and analysis. One method of identifying your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is to complete a SWOT analysis. This can help an individual understand what areas need further improvement, as well as what assets they might have. All of these things can impact on what type of personal development an individual might want to consider undertaking.
**Activity**

This exercise aims to help you to identify your strengths and weaknesses, and to think about your feelings about the opportunities and challenges you see ahead of you.

This is an exercise which considers your **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)**. This involves assessing yourself not just in isolation, but actually assessing your overall situation. For example under **Strengths** you will list particular skills and qualities you have as an individual (e.g. word processing skills, persuasiveness), but you might also list people and resources available to you. So it would be appropriate to list, say, ‘supportive friends and family’ or ‘good Internet access’ as strengths.
The same applies to your **Weaknesses**. These will include skills you wish to acquire and qualities you wish to develop, but may also include things you don't have access to but may need in the future such as information on where to find an unusual evening class or having Internet access at home.
Opportunities will again include resources available to you so will strongly link to your strengths. They might include for example potential part-time work opportunities, social and leisure opportunities, chances to travel; basically any potential situations which could positively affect your personal and professional development.
**Threats** are the factors that have the potential to hinder your progress. They will be linked to your weaknesses, and might include opportunities you don’t have. Something as simple as ‘lack of time’ may be a threat, for example, if you want to develop a skill or get specific work experience, but you already have a lot of study, work and family responsibilities which make that more difficult.
In the table on the following page titled **SWOT Analysis Table** record your **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities**, and **Threats** under the appropriate headings. Then start to analyse your own situation under these headings. It may help to reflect on all issues, problems, plans and events that concern you right now.

Remember to bear in mind that in this exercise you are not just analysing yourself in isolation, but your overall situation, which includes resources and people around you and maybe even political or economic factors that might affect your ultimate plans after you have finished this course for example. Experience suggests that this is a very useful exercise to return to at crucial times in your career/life. We suggest that you do this from time to time.
### SWOT Analysis Table

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Personal development is an ongoing requirement

Personal development is about developing and improving aspects of an individual which can include areas such as education, motivation, feelings, health, skills, abilities, and more. As life and circumstances are constantly changing, it is necessary to continue developing as a person in order to improve as individuals and to be able to adapt to changing situations. Personal development requires an individual to set goals or benchmarks that define a point which can be achieved through goal setting and planning. This allows progress and assessment to occur which allows an individual to receive feedback regarding change and development.

Personal development is different for every individual and it can be tailored to fit personal circumstances. For example personal development for a new computer technician working in an IT department for a large computer sales company would be different from the personal development needs of an experienced computer technician setting up their own business. One part of personal development is known as professional development. Professional development is about the skills and knowledge needed for personal development and career progression. Both personal and professional development can have a formal and informal approach. A formal approach could include formal education or technical training and an informal approach could include reflection and/or feedback from others.
Personal development is often a personal responsibility before your enter an organisation and usually once you are working within an organisation. It is often up to the individual to manage their ongoing development. Learning and development activities can come about by different channels which include:

- Hands on work, learning by doing
- Learning by observing others around you
- Organised and structured training programmes
- Performance reviews/appraisals
- Formal education
- Personal reading and research
**Activity**

On the following page you will find a diagram containing boxes and arrows. This is an activity that you should complete individually and you should consider all areas/aspects of your personal life (e.g. feelings, training, family, work).

1. Fill in box titled “Currently I am...”. You should include as much detail as possible to describe your current state. (Example answer: I am employed as a manager at Smith Company. I am married with two kids and healthy. I am happy. I am working on a qualification in IT.)

2. Now do the same for the boxes titled “In two years I want to be...”, As an example an answer might be: “I would like to move up the managerial career ladder”. “I would like to complete my IT qualification and develop my IT experience within the company”. “In five years I want to be...”, and “In ten years I want to be...”

3. After you have completed all of the boxes as detailed above, the next step is to complete the remaining arrow boxes. When completing the arrow boxes you should list what changes and/or adjustments will need to occur in order to achieve what is listed in the next box.

So in order to move from the section “Currently I am...” to “In two years I want to be...” An example answer may be: “I will need to attend accounting classes”. “I will have to give up some family time to study”. “I will have to volunteer to take on more projects at work”.

Self Awareness and Personal Development
In five years I want
In ten years I want
Currently I am.....
Currently I am.....
In two years I want
"Personal Development is an Ongoing Process of Change"
In five years I want
In two years I want
In ten years I want
In two years I want
Currently I am.....
Currently I am.....
In two years I want
In five years I want
In ten years I want
"Personal Development is an Ongoing Process of Change"
Current personal development needs

In order for personal development to occur, you must first identify what your personal development needs are.

There are 3 aspects you need to consider:

1. Your knowledge base
2. Your skills
3. Your attitude

All three issues are equally important for holistic personal development. For example, if you just focus on developing your knowledge base, while this is important, it won’t help you to fully develop.

Knowledge base

In order to enhance your knowledge base to help you develop you need to consider where you are now in terms of your knowledge, and what knowledge you need in order to get to where you want to be. Think of this as a personal reflective audit. So, for example, if you would like to become an accountant within the next five years but you do not have the required knowledge base then one of your key
personal development needs would be to identify how you would go about gaining this knowledge. With this example you would probably end up going on a formal education course. However, there are other ways to develop your knowledge base, such as, work shadowing and placements, personal study, coaching, mentoring and short courses.

**Skills**

Enhancing your knowledge in an area such as the example above (becoming an accountant) is necessary, but on it's own would not be sufficient. So, you also need to audit your skill set.

The first thing is that knowledge is a prerequisite for skill development. A person needs to know what to do and when to do it (this is knowledge). However, a gap separates knowing things from actually being able to do them. A good example to illustrate this is driving a car. You can learn about how to drive a car from reading books, watching videos, and listening to people telling you how to drive i.e. you can gain a lot of knowledge about driving a car without ever sitting in one! Having knowledge is necessary but in itself is not sufficient. You need to learn how to drive a car, and this involves a set of skills in order to become a competent driver. So, a skill is about being proficient at doing something, as opposed to having knowledge about how it works.
There are two stages to skill development, compilation and automaticity. Compilation is the early stages of skill development, where you are learning and practicing the skill. You have to think about what you are doing at this stage. As you become more experienced you will eventually start to do things automatically i.e. without consciously thinking about it, and this is the point at which you have mastered a skill.

So, you need to undertake a personal audit of your skills that you need to gain and/or enhance in order to get to where you want to be. You then need to come up with a plan for how you will go about doing it.
Attitudes

Attitudes are often forgotten when people are thinking about their personal development needs. However, this is such a mistake, as attitude can set you aside from other people and give you a real advantage in the workplace (and indeed in other aspects of your life). Interviews, for example, are an important tool for employers to judge your attitude towards work.

What is ‘attitude’? Attitude is a mental set, a way of thinking and behaving that makes a person respond in a particular way to a particular stimulus. For example, some people react negatively when they receive negative feedback at work, whereas others take the feedback and respond in a more positive way. So their attitude affects how they respond, and in turn other people around them react to this response. Generally speaking, the more positive your attitude, the more productive you tend to be, and the more people are likely to want to be around you.

At work you will have a wide variety of attitudes towards different things. For example, you will have an attitude toward working hours, expected dress code, policies and procedures, pay and benefits, working environment and so in. You will also have an overall attitude toward work. So, you can assess your overall attitude towards work, or you can assess your attitude towards individual issues/aspects.
In our example about becoming an accountant you should find out what it is like to actually do the job, and also what kind of working environments accountants work in. Then, you should consider what attitudes would endear you to the occupation. For example, if accountants work in organisations that have predictable work patterns e.g. 9 am until 5pm, and those environments expect you to wear formal attire, what are your attitudes towards these two aspects?

One question to ask yourself is whether or not you think you can develop your attitude?

It is not the same as learning a new skill set or acquiring new knowledge.

Developing attitudes generally takes longer and cannot be ‘taught’. Attitudes tend to develop over time in response to experiences and environments we find ourselves in.
**Activity**

Identify one thing that you aspire to do or become in the near future. This could be a new job or a promotion where you currently work. Or, it could be something you have always wanted to do, for example, go deep sea diving. Then identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes that you think will help you get there, and suggest ways in which you could gain these things. You could use a layout as follows to structure your thinking and responses to the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspiration/goal</th>
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**Self Awareness and Personal Development**
**Skills**

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**Attitudes**

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Mission and vision statements

Mission and vision statements are relevant to individuals and organisations as they help in building the framework for success. Mission and vision statements are two distinct ideas. A personal vision statement can help guide an individual’s life as it defines your purpose and makes reference to your personal values. Therefore a personal vision statement can inspire and motivate an individual to achieve their best. A clear vision statement can also shape how your work, guide your decision making process and define how you fit into an organisation. It is also important to remember that personal vision statements can change over time as personal circumstances and environments are very dynamic.

A personal vision statement will vary between individuals as people can hold different values and goals. For example, David works for an agency that helps people find employment. His personal vision statement is:

“To live a life dedicated to loyalty, challenge, personal growth and happiness. To build relationships and help people feel better about themselves. To enjoy my family and my leisure time. To enrich my life through the arts and travel.”
On the other hand a personal mission statement fits under a personal vision statement as the vision statement has a broader more general sense of giving purpose. A personal mission statement however gives focus and direction. For example a personal mission statement can state what you would like to accomplish and who you would like to become within a certain period. A mission statement gives an individual focus so they know where to direct their energy, actions and decisions. An example of a personal mission statement could be as follows:

“To become the General Manager at Star’s Department Store so that I can apply my personal training and education within a role that allows me to develop and lead individuals. I will do this by completing all necessary training points to become General Manager and by taking any opportunities that arise to learn the other job roles within the store.”

The important thing to remember that when writing a vision or mission statement there is not a particular format or formula. On the following page are some basic guidelines on how to construct a personal mission statement.
**Tips for writing a personal mission statement**

- Keep your statement simple and brief. Three to five sentences would be appropriate.

- Write your statement so that it focuses on who you want to become and keep it direct with regard to the area you want to develop/change. Consider specific qualities and actions that would impact on the area you want to develop.

- Keep your mission statement positive. State what you want to do or become. Stay away from saying what you don’t want to do or don’t want to be. Find positive alternatives to any negative statements.

- Develop a mission statement that you can use in your everyday decisions and actions.

- Consider how your mission statement will impact on other areas of your life. Compare you mission statement to your vision statement. Is your mission statement in alignment with your vision statement?

- Keep your mission statement personal and it will inspire you into achievement.

- Always remember that your mission statement is not inflexible. You will continue to
adapt and change your personal mission statement as you grow and gain new insights about yourself and what you want to achieve in life.
Activity

In order to construct a vision and/or mission statement you will need to understand yourself and your vision a bit better. Think about the following questions and record your answers. Your answers to the questions listed below will help guide you when it is time to create your personal vision and/or mission statement.

1. What are ten things you enjoy doing the most? These are the ten things without which your weeks, months, and years would feel incomplete.

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________________________________________________________________________
2. What three things must you do every single day to feel fulfilled in your work?

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3. What are six of your most important values?

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
4. Your life has a number of important facets or dimensions, all of which deserve some attention in your personal vision statement. Write one important goal for each of them:

a. physical
b. spiritual
c. work or career
d. family
e. social relationships
f. financial security
g. mental improvement and attention
h. fun
5. If you never had to work another day in your life, how would you spend your time instead of working?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

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6. When your life is ending, what will you regret not doing, seeing, or achieving?

________________________________________________________________________________________

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7. What strengths have other people commented on about you and your accomplishments? What strengths do you see in yourself?

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8. What weaknesses have other people commented on about you and what do you believe are your weaknesses?

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Overview

This section of the course book has raised your awareness of self awareness and personal development. By being more self aware you will be able to gain more control and make better decisions, be more flexible and confident in your approach, communicate more effectively and hopefully reduce stress levels and get more out of life. One way we have considered to be useful when trying to analyse ourselves is by applying a SWOT analysis as this can help in pinpointing any strengths and weaknesses we may have. We have also seen that some helpful personal development opportunities can arise not just from formal training programmes but from simply observing others around you. We have looked at some development activities and noted that personal development is an ongoing activity. Finally the section concluded with a brief look at personal mission statements.
Notes ...
ABP Intermediate Awards

ABP Intermediate Diploma in International Business Skills

International Business Skills Course

Business Etiquette
Business Basics and Finance
People Skills
Self Awareness and Personal Development
Customer Service
Business Basics and Finance
Time Management
IT for Business

PROFESSIONAL TEST DELIVERY THROUGH

Global Leader in Computer-based Testing
Make a **Difference**

Not Just a **Living**

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