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An individual portfolio that develops the student’s knowledge and reflective nature of their personal and professional development in practice

Sport Management In Practice 2

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**Reflective Analysis On My Time At The University Of Derby & Derby County Football Club**

**Introduction**

My reflective analysis of the past year is to be conducted to aid my overall professional development that I am undertaking throughout my studies in Derby. Monica (2012) defined the term professional development as a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to the improvement of oneself in terms of the working world. I feel that this reflective analysis is the ideal way for me to look back at the positives and negatives of the experiences that I have had so far, and how I can put all this into making myself a better and more rounded professional.

I will be reviewing my Derby County Football Club placements, my strengths within the organisation, weaknesses and how I can use these in order to create a better experience in the future for myself and students who will undertake placement in the future. Alongside reviewing placements, my strengths, weaknesses and other opportunities that have presented themselves to me, I have also created an online portfolio, which explains certain areas of my life both personally, and academically, in more depth. This website also allows me to have a chance to show creativity and imagination before a potential employer has even met me.

**Main Body**

Placements with Derby County have been essential to my development throughout my degree programme. One of the key areas that I wanted to work on before I started the degree was the fan interaction side of sport, because my view shares that of Kassing (2010) who explains how it is a powerful connection between the two parties that can determine success or failure for an organisation. Derby County FC (2016) explain in their club charter how they aim to receive a first class reputation in regards to customer service, and this echoes how I approached my work placements. One of main strengths that I found from my work placement is to ask the obvious questions, that don’t often get asked, for example, how? Derby state they want this first class reputation, so instead of doing the basic task and thinking no more about it, I have asked how is this done? Or why is this done? In order to access the first hand information about how it effects customers and their own experiences. I can put this knowledge into practice in my further placements, for example, whilst on my ‘Commercial’ placement I spoke various members of staff who explained DCFC’s way of approaching fans when asking questions. Although this seems like a simple enough piece of advice, later in the year it proved vital when working for Drayton Manor at their family fun day. I was able to use all the previous advice I was given after I asked the obvious questions, to connect with them in a way that no one else that day was doing. This resulted in me and my colleague being the only pair to successfully talk to enough fans to hand out all of our merchandise, and receive the highest number of customer contact on the day. (McEvoy-Robinson, 2016)

I am always conducting professional development within myself, and it is argued by Megginson & Whitaker (2007) to be most effective when reflecting on negative experiences, rather than trying to replicate positive ones. Experiences are only negative if we let them be, and unfortunately this is what I did on my very first placement with Derby County Football Club in the Community Department. Due to a mix up before the date, the club didn’t actually know I was coming that day and subsequently didn’t have anything planned for me and I was stuck for much of the day with nothing to do. This was unfortunate, but using my development skills I reflected back on that day to see what I could have done differently to make the day more effective. I realised that during the quieter parts of the day I could have talked to fellow employees to see what steps they recommended I take in order to progress myself for the future, and tap into their vast experiences to maybe avoid some of the mistakes they say that they made. Using these interviews throughout the day I could have walked away from my placement with a greater knowledge of the community department than I had before, even though I hadn’t been set that task by the Football Club. I then wanted to put this into practice to see if my selected area of development would work in all my future endeavours, and a few weeks later I got the opportunity to work in the Commercial department. Whilst here I asked 7 different members of staff for 10 minutes alone in order to ask them about their working life and what steps they take in order to improve themselves. I found this to be by far the most productive part of the day, and one member of staff, Samantha Wilkinson said it was (Wilkinson, 2016) “Refreshing to see a student care so much about placement.” So once I found a technique that allowed me to access more form my placements, I have subsequently put It into practice every day that I have been a Derby County Football Club, allowing me to make a good impression on staff and make me more of a memorable student who they may invite back, which has happened on 3 of my placements. (Halvorson, 2012)

One of the main strengths I found from the preparation of work placement was the implementation of a student point of contact by Derby County Football Club. The welcoming email received a week before placement allowed me to have a name to ask for on day one, and subsequently was greeted with a warm welcome by the club. To improve on this further I would like to still see this email from the student point of contact, but furthermore Derby County Football Club should also have one of the member of the department where the student will be email too, to allow for a more welcoming feeling and allow me as a student to feel welcomed and wanted in the offices. (Fanthome, 2004).

Looking at all the evidence that I have form my time with Derby County, on placements, fan giveaways and the Drayton Manor family fun day, I can draw some points of which I wish to improve for the future to allow me to benefit more from my future work experience. One of the main areas I would improve for the future is taking up every opportunity that passes my way. I feel like I have already done this to an extent, signing up for more than most students throughout my time with the University, for example additional programmes such as the Willmott Dixon Coaching Programme, but I have regretted not taking up everything I can with Derby County. I understand this may not always be possible, both with my own time constraints, and the amount of students that apply for these positions, but from looking back at the data, I want to make sure my next professional development piece does not have any negatives that are of my own doing, of which this is one. I will only be able to expand my own working relations by attending as much a physically possible.

**Conclusion**

Ee & Chang (2015) explain how the best employees can adapt to the workplace at an early age. I feel like all I’m doing at Derby County this year and the coming years is the perfect preparation for a very demanding industry, professional sport. I will be able to use this document to see where I feel like I can improve, and re-visit it at regular intervals and compare to it future reflective analysis that I will complete in order to track my progress.

My time at Derby County has allowed me to expand myself and develop new skills beyond any expectations that I had before I enrolled with the University. But the key is to not let this stop now. I will use all that I have found through my website and my piece of writing to ensure that I carry on developing as a person in order to be the best that can be. (Hall, 2011)

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**Appendix:**

SWOT analysis of myself during my time at Derby County

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| --- | --- |
| **Strengths**  Ask questions of staff to gain extra knowledge  Time keeping  Great DCFC staff feedback  Asked Media + Commercial teams for contact details so I can extra work outside of term time | **Weaknesses**  First impression (eye contact, hand shake etc)  Business Jargon knowledge could be improved  Have I taken up enough opportunites? |
| **Opportunities**  Ask about returning during holidays  Volunteer opportunities sent through | **Threats**  Other students making better impressions that me  If I turn down opportunities I may not get presented future ones |