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**Assignment 1 - A1.1 Professional ME**

INF20028



**Introduction**

Going into the working world, one must learn and equip themselves with adequate competency and a professional manner, as these attributes impact various aspects of work, ranging from satisfaction to performance (Dinger et al., 2015, p. 304). This assignment is aimed at helping strengthen such qualities and prepare oneself for further ventures through reflection. As such, I intend to implement Gibb’s (1988) reflective cycle for each section of this essay, which commences with a description, followed by feelings, evaluation, and concluding with a summary and an action plan.

**Industry Awareness: Reflecting on your knowledge and understanding of the IT industry:**

1. How would you describe your current understanding of the IT industry as a whole?

I have an average understanding of the IT industry, and I am familiar with various career routes and trends. Moreover, I am aware of its constant evolution and challenges, like cybersecurity risks and rapid technical advancements. As stated, I am only an amateur in the IT field; hence, I aim to develop myself further going forward in my studies and career.

1. What is your current understanding of the latest trends and developments in the IT industry and how do you stay updated on the latest trends and developments in the IT industry?

Businesses around the world recognize A.I and cloud-based architecture as powerful tools that should be implemented in their operations, according to Wan et al. (2018), cloud computing, and AI can be used to optimize resource utilization and system management to meet market demands. Along with that, the need for IT governance also becomes a focal point due to higher need of cybersecurity to protect data, “Security and data breaches expose governance issues and weak management… Hence, firms must secure critical infrastructure and protect stakeholders’ interests in privacy.” (Sartawi, 2020).

With information technology's rapid evolution, I am slightly concerned about staying up to date with all the new information; hence, I personally find it useful to watch videos on new and upcoming trends, as they are concise and I can listen to the audio when I am busy. I am also fond of reading technology-oriented magazines and articles as an alternative to videos.

1. Can you identify any of the key challenges and opportunities in the IT industry today?

From my perspective, massive layoffs are one of the largest issues facing the IT sector to date, and certain IT positions are now less desirable than they were a year ago. According to Hang (2023), since the end of 2022, there have been about 380,000 layoffs globally, and 20% more businesses are said to hire fewer programmers in 2023. This change has had a powerful impact on the IT industry. As suggested by CPS IT Consulting Pty Ltd. (2023), 50% of IT personnel are worried about their job security. However, with challenges come opportunities, especially for highly skilled professionals.

Demands for skilled professionals in cybersecurity, AI, cloud soar as managers is especially in need of expertise in these sectors. With 61% of hiring managers planning to expand their teams (Robert Half, 2023). This increased demand for professionals prompts an opportunity for people to expand their skill set through continuous learning and self-development to secure a position with high security in the current market.

1. What aspects of the IT industry are you hoping to learn more about during this unit?

I am interested in dwelling into how businesses, especially IT businesses, incorporate new technologies into their operations. I want to understand the decision-making process behind investments as in how do they make that determination? Moreover, I would love to figure out the ranking structure within the IT industry; ultimately, I hope to grasp the skills needed for each level of progression, gaining insight into how different skills play out at different stages of advancement.

**Organisational Competencies, Soft Skills, or Functional Skills: Reflecting on your understanding and awareness of your soft skills or functional skills.**

1. How would you define organisational competencies, soft skills, or functional skills?

From my understanding, organsational competencies refers to the collective capabilities that enable an organization to deliver value, compete in the market, and adapt to changes (Bonifacio, 2023). While soft skills are defined as interpersonal qualities, people skills, and personal attributes that one possesses (Robles, 2012). The term ‘functional skills’ is a broad term that carries a lot of meaning depending on the context, and in the IT industry, it is defined as “the core English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills people need to solve problems” (Indeed, 2023).

1. Which soft skills do you believe are most important for a professional in the IT industry? Why?

I consider communication the key to any professional, because not only does it act as a means to maintain your relationship with colleagues and client, communication is also used to get work done (Schnurr, 2012, p. 1). Continuous learning is another trait I strongly value; in the quickly changing IT landscape, IT professionals need to be able to keep up with new developments and market trends in order to be productive and flexible. I am passionate about these soft skills because I know how important they are for navigating the ever-changing IT industry.

1. Reflecting on your current soft skill competencies, which soft skills do you think you need to improve or develop further?

I use Robles' (2012) list of necessary skills as a benchmark to evaluate my own performance. Combining with the Gibbs reflective cycle, I have determined the critical skills like communication, leadership, and professional ethics are essential to the advancement of my career. Even though I would not describe myself as lacking in these areas, I reckon there are definitely room for development going forward.

1. What steps are you planning to take during this course to enhance your soft skills?

I take inspiration from Kelly's (2019) idea of leadership as a networked, cooperative, swarming, and responsive system to improve my leadership abilities. My goal is to assume a leadership position in my team by actively contributing to decision-making, encouraging collaboration, and advancing efficient communication via attentive listening and active presence. Additionally, as HireQuotient emphasizes, qualities like accountability, dependability, and dedication are critical to the development of solid work ethics. Therefore, I want to dedicate more time to researching and practicing my skills to be fully prepared and competent, which will ultimately improve my professional ethics.

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