Module 3 - Lesson 5 activity: Your tester skills plan

Reflect on your skills, set development goals, and create a plan for growth as a software tester. Each section includes examples to guide you. This activity is structured as a SWOT analysis, helping you identify your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to create a focused development plan.

While strengths often align with areas we enjoy, it's equally important to balance professional growth by developing skills in areas that may feel challenging. By working on both the skills you find fulfilling and those that need improvement, you'll build a well-rounded skill set that strengthens your confidence, expands your capabilities, and opens up new opportunities for career growth.

Section 1: Self-assessment of key skills

In this section, you'll reflect on the essential skills needed as a software tester and list a few of your key strengths and weaknesses, describing how each contributes to or impacts your work.

Strengths Reflect on the essential skills (e.g. communication, critical thinking, collaboration, attention to detail, curiosity etc.) and list 2-3 of your strengths and describe how they contribute to your testing work.	
Strength	**Description**
Example: *Critical thinking*	*I analyse issues deeply and consider multiple perspectives, which helps me find root causes and evaluate scenarios thoroughly during testing.*
Strength 1	
Strength 2	

Strength 3	

Weaknesses
Identify 2-3 areas where you'd like to improve, including why you feel these areas need attention.

Weakness	Description
Example: *Time management*	*I sometimes spend too long on tasks without realising it. Improving this will help me complete tasks more efficiently and meet deadlines consistently.*
Weakness 1	
Weakness 2	
Weakness 3	

Section 2: Identify opportunities and threats

In this section, you'll focus on one strength and one weakness from your self-assessment. These should be areas you feel are especially important for your growth right now. Next, identify potential opportunities to develop or apply each skill, as well as any threats that could hinder your progress.

Strength		
Skill to develop Select a strength that you'd like to develop.	**Opportunity** List potential ways to enhance this skill in your work and resources that could help.	**Threat** Identify any challenges that could impact your ability to grow in this area.
Example: *Critical thinking*	*By seeking feedback from my team on my critical analysis skills, and asking for specific tips and examples to refine my approach, will help me develop more effective techniques and broaden my perspective on tackling testing challenges.*	*Strict project deadlines often reduce the time I have for in-depth critical thinking, making it difficult to perform thorough analyses. This time pressure can limit my ability to explore issues and evaluate potential risks fully.*
Chosen strength:		

Weakness

Skill to develop Select one weakness that you'd like to develop.	Opportunity List potential ways to enhance this skill in your work and resources that could help.	Threat Identify any challenges that could impact your ability to grow in this area.
Example: *Time Management*	*To improve my time management, I plan to use a time-tracking tool to monitor how long I spend on each task. I'll also seek advice from colleagues who manage their time well, to learn strategies for staying on track and prioritising effectively.*	*High workloads and frequent project changes often disrupt my focus, making it harder to maintain a balanced schedule. This can lead to a cycle of spending too long on some tasks while rushing others*
Chosen weakness:		

Section 3: Set SMART Goals

Based on your analysis of opportunities and threats, create one SMART goal for each of your selected areas (strength and weakness). Ensure each goal is:

1. **Specific:** Clearly define the skill or area you aim to improve.
2. **Measurable:** State how you'll track your progress.
3. **Achievable:** Set a realistic goal within your capabilities and resources.
4. **Relevant:** Ensure it aligns with your testing role.
5. **Time-bound:** Specify a timeline for achieving the goal.

Examples:
- **Strength goal:**
  I will improve my critical thinking by scheduling monthly feedback sessions with trusted colleagues to gather insights on my analysis methods and broaden my perspectives. To account for strict deadlines, I'll set aside a dedicated 15-minute period at the start of each week to prioritise time for deeper analysis on key tasks. I aim to integrate at least one piece of feedback into my approach each month for the next 3 months, ensuring I build this skill.
- **Weakness goal:**
  I will improve my time management by using a time-tracking tool for one month to monitor how long I spend on tasks. My goal is to complete all tasks within estimated timeframes by the end of the month. To counter frequent changes, I'll set aside 15 minutes each day to adjust my schedule based on new priorities. I'll review progress weekly to ensure I'm staying on track and adapting as needed.

Write your SMART goals here.

- **Strength goal:**

- **Weakness goal:**

Revisiting Your SMART Goals

Save this worksheet in your portfolio to track your progress and revisit your plan regularly. This plan format will serve as a valuable resource throughout your testing career. As you achieve your SMART goals, set new ones to keep your development ongoing and aligned with your growth.

Revised SMART goals

Use the prompts below to help set fresh SMART goals that keep you moving forward.

Strength Goal

Write your updated or new goal here, focusing on further building on your strengths in your testing work.

- **Strength goal:**

Weakness Goal

Write your updated or new goal here, targeting an area where you want to improve, based on your progress and any recent challenges.

- **Weakness goal:**