How to get skilled?

These days, many people enjoy learning

new skills and proudly share their achievements in fly fishing,

parasailing, weightlifting, and many other things.

Technology comes in very handy in organizing and monitoring skill building activities.

People can now use YouTube, Khan Academy,

and many specialized applications to develop and refine their existing skills.

In this course, we will focus on

one very important aspect of skills management with the use of technology.

We will show you how you can organize skill building activities to

succeed in a skill-based competitive job selection.

To begin, let's think about why demonstrating mastery of skills has

become so vitally important for career growth in the modern economy.

Remarkably, it was not always the case.

In the past, the pace of technological change was slower than it is today.

Companies were interested in hiring people who could stay with them for life.

To get the right person,

employers would typically consider long term factors such as education,

personal traits, and the track record of a prospective employee.

Accordingly, candidates used to highlight those factors in their resume.

In those years, college degrees were said to open doors.

Personality test dominated personnel selection.

As far as job skills were concerned,

they were mostly gained on the job over a period

of time through professional development and training.

In the present moment, technology moves incredibly fast.

Companies cannot afford to hire people for life anymore.

Personnel selection is now linked to

specific projects where job specific tasks need to be accomplished.

At all levels, employees are hired very much like

contractors to immediately deliver concrete results based on their ability.

You can see it in contemporary job ads,

where employers typically describe job duties and

ask for specific skill sets above having,

for example, a degree from

a respected institution and being a reliable hardworking person.

This emphasis on skills is very logical and easy to understand.

When you hire a contractor,

you are more likely to focus on the person's ability to

get a specific task or project done,

rather than his or her educational credentials or personality traits.

Following recent changes in the economy,

companies have shifted the focus of managing human capital to mastery of skills.

To identify a desired skill set,

they often scan job applications using

sophisticated technologies such as data analytics and artificial intelligence.

Upon recruitment, employers monitor the skills of their employees using

various talent management tools and techniques such as performance indicators,

competency dashboards, and workforce analytics.

By adjusting the demands of the skill-based economy,

companies strive for competitive advantage.

It is believed that hiring and cultivating

the most skilled workforce is indeed linked to superior market performance.

Now, here's a question for you as a career builder.

Is there anything that you can learn from the corporate world to increase

your chances to succeed in a skill-based, competitive job selection in your field?

To find out, we'll do three quick tests.

But before we do this,

it's important to clarify our assumptions.

From what we have learned about our typical students on Coursera,

we assume that you are likely to be a working professional,

25 to 45 years old, well-educated,

and interested in professional development to advance or change your career.

It is likely that you have already identified a range of skills that you want to master.

It is essential that you have already gone

through a skill-based competitive selection process,

maybe several times, so that you have gained firsthand experience.

It's great if you succeed in all your endeavors,

but it's likely that sometimes you didn't,

which may make you even more interested in the course.

We assume that selection is generally fair,

unbiased, and based on mastery of skills.

Now, let's go to the test.

Test one, Skills Base.

In contemporary job ads,

employers usually ask for specific skills required for the job.

How do you usually respond to the skills request in the job advertising?

Choose one answer that best describes your strategy.

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Test two is called the Total Skillset Score.

As you know, new job offerings are often highly competitive.

It's said a HR professional has only six seconds to review each resume.

Not surprisingly, in the modern economy,

companies increasingly use artificial intelligence to score and preselect candidates.

In other words, before you can get

an in-person or a video interview with the hiring manager,

your application will likely be scored by a pre-programmed robot.

What is your strategy to ensure that your skillset,

as reflected in the application,

will get a high score?

Choose one answer that best describes your strategy.

Finally, let's do one more test.

Test three, Skills Management.

As a busy professional,

you probably have very limited time for professional development,

but is it as effective and efficient as possible?

Effective means that the result of your skill-building activities,

for example, taking online courses,

you indeed reach your career goals.

Being efficient means that you spend less time and accomplish better results.

But what is your strategy to ensure that

your skill building activities are both effective and efficient?

Choose one answer that best describes your strategy.

Your answers to the above questions will help you understand

your level of readiness to compete in a skills based economy.

They will also help you identify what you need to

learn in this course to address any gaps.

If you answered A in all three tests,

you may be highly skilled in some professional areas,

but are more likely to underperform in situations of

skill-based competitive selection process because

you are not properly managing your portfolio of skills.

We think that you should definitely take this course.

If your answer is B in all three tests,

it is evident that you are already using

smart common sense approaches to developing and presenting your skills.

This is likely to have already helped you stand out from the crowd.

We think that you may still significantly benefit from the course by learning about

skills management techniques that are inspired by professionals in the corporate world.

Finally, if you answered C in all three tests,

you must be an expert in

individual skills management and should probably consider becoming a career coach.

Still, as skills management is both an art and a science,

you may be able to find something useful in this course and think about how to implement

skills management to the development of

other career skills such as presenting skills and impression management.

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this lecture,

we will review what we have learned in the course.

Then, in the last lecture,

we will discuss future steps that you may want to take to become a skills management pro.

The overarching goal of individual skills management is to

develop a guide for career enhancement in a competitive, ever changing environment.

Our intended target audience is young to middle aged,

however you define it,

educated working professionals who are looking for

efficient ways to attain new work-related skills.

In a nutshell, the most important recommendation in this course is that,

to accomplish the goal.

You should learn how to quantify your skills,

so you can realistically estimate the total skill set score for your desired position.

Once you have learned how to objectively measure your skills,

you will be able to effectively organize, develop,

and present them in a skill-based job selection process.

The main idea behind the course is that

individual skills management is a skill in itself.

Like any other skill,

it can be learned and perfected.

Therefore, if you want to effectively use

your professional development time and accomplish better results,

we think that you should take skills management seriously,

and invest some time into mastering it.

In this course, we only provided a brief introduction to individual skills management.

We recommended some practical approaches, methods,

and tools that can be useful to organize,

quantify, measure, develop and monitor your skills.

We also suggested some ideas about how to better

present and promote your skills to prospective employers.

In lesson one, we began by discussing what skills management is about.

For inspiration, we derive some useful lessons from business strategy.

For example, we discussed how companies identify, develop,

and measure key competencies to succeed in a competitive environment.

Then, we contemplated the desired outcomes of

a possible individual skills management training program,

trying to envision what you may have achieved had you completed such a program.

For this purpose, we introduced the individual skills management framework.

In the end of the course,

you'll be able to check your progress against

the framework and see what you have learned,

and what you may still need to learn about individual skills management in the future.

In lesson two, we discussed what practical approaches, methods, and tools,

can be used for individual skills management in a competitive job market environment.

First, we demonstrated that to operationalize and effectively manage your skills,

you will need to cluster them into job-specific skill sets.

After that, we learned how to use performance management techniques to

objectively evaluate the level of skill acquisition for each skill within the skill set.

Finally, we learned how to realistically estimate a total skill set score.

As a result, by now you should be able to quantify, measure,

and monitor your skills organized into job-specific skill sets.

Also, in lesson two, we introduced JAFAR,

the skills manager, which is

a spreadsheet application specifically designed for this course.

We recommended that you make JAFAR your skills management companion,

and use it often,

very much the same ways you use your favorite yoga,

weight training, weight control,

and other personal development apps.

JAFAR is a simple but powerful tool.

In addition to helping you organize skill building routines,

it can deliver tangible outcomes and even perform some magic tricks.

For example, with the push of a button,

JAFAR can convert your skill building nodes into

a powerful selection criteria statement that can

be immediately useful for your next job application.

In lesson three and four,

we put skills management to work and explored how you could implement the methods and

techniques introduced in the course in three typical career growth scenarios.

Namely, job excellence, job enhancement, and job diversification.

Using the same scenarios,

we demonstrated some of the tangible outcomes provided by the skills manager app.

While working on scenario one, job excellence,

you focused on the job you know well,

your current job, and learned how to master skills management methods and techniques.

Using a realistic case study and utilizing

some of the performance management approaches used in the business world,

you learned how to conduct a thorough job analysis,

identify benchmarks and bench marking criteria,

collect evidence, and obtain and validate assessment results.

To help you in the process,

we introduced a range of new methods and tools.

Some of which we designed specifically for this course,

such as the JAFAR individual skills management model,

the simple critical tasks framework,

the three-tiered skill set model,

and the individual skills management matrix.

The first tangible outcome that you achieved in

the course is an improved ability to objectively evaluate,

quantify, and monitor your existing job-specific skill set.

By now, you should be able to conduct a thorough and objective skill set review,

and come up with an externally verified competency dashboard,

and a realistic estimate for your total skill set score.

While working on scenario two, job enhancement,

you focused on a job you are interested in,

potentially your next job,

and learned how to implement skills management methods and techniques,

to improve your competitive standing in the job selection process.

You learned how to estimate your likely competitive standing in the job competition,

identify your strengths and weaknesses,

and decide on a concrete and effective course of action for professional development.

The second tangible outcome of the course is that you learn how you can use JAFAR,

the skills manager application,

to generate a powerful and informative selection criteria statement.

This is an evidence-based, data-driven,

and externally verified document that you can use to communicate

the increased value of your job-specific skill set to potential employers.

We also discussed how you can incorporate the data into a functional resume,

if it is applicable in your situation.

When working on scenario three, job diversification,

you focused on an opportunity to extend

your job search area by adding a skill and a different occupational field.

You learned how to use skills management methods and techniques to guide you through

the entry process by identifying a sequence of

concrete targets for effective professional development.

The third tangible outcome of the course is that you learned how to use

skills management methods and techniques as a guiding framework,

to set and accomplish concrete and effective skill building goals.

By now, you should be able to use JAFAR,

the skills manager application,

to design a job-specific skill set for the job you are interested

in but may not be able to attain because of an insufficient skill level.

Then, you should be able to decide on

a concrete data-driven course of action for professional development.

Finally, you should be able to convert the course of action

into quantifiable targets and set a sequence of S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goals.

Overall, when working on the course,

we wanted to fill a void.

While there are thousands of online courses offering

career builders numerous opportunities for learning new skills,

there are very few courses teaching people how to

effectively organize and manage their skills portfolio.

We think that upon completion of the course,

you should be more confident in your ability to build and strengthen your skills base.

So eventually, you will become more

successful in the strategic game of competitive selection.

By utilizing the methods and techniques of individual skills management,

you should be able to better prepare for future job competitions,

and to achieve higher scores.

This way, you will have more control over your career growth.

One final note. These days,

the concept of quantified self is getting more traction.

More and more people use all sorts of

gadgets to measure and control virtually everything.

Personal development apps have become widespread.

Some day, individual skills management will be commonplace.

But right now, you have the advantage of being

among the first to master it. Welcome to the club.

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