



Cardiff Business School

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# Individual Reflection Report - 23089900

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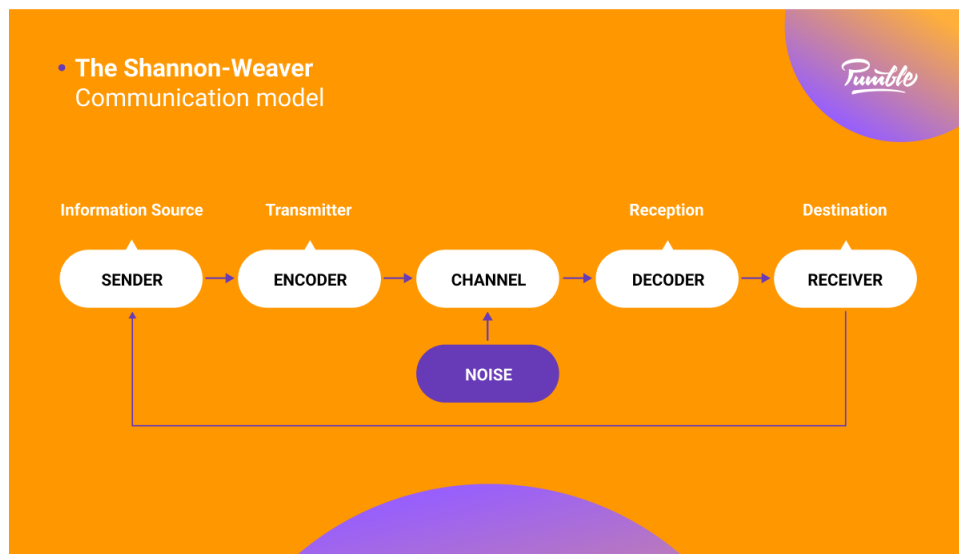
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## Key Learnings

### Learning the Importance of Clear Communication

The first key learning was the importance of clear communication. During our group project, we encountered several instances where tasks were misunderstood, leading to delays and confusion. This issue was particularly prominent in the early stages when roles and responsibilities weren't clearly communicated. The lack of clear communication caused frustration within the team as tasks were often duplicated or left incomplete. I felt stressed when it became apparent that we were not all on the same page.



**Figure 1: The Shannon-Weaver communication model diagram**

According to Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model, effective communication requires clear transmission of messages without interference. In our group project, the lack of clarity and subsequent noise led to misunderstandings, which aligns with this model's explanation of communication breakdowns (see Figure 1). However, this challenge highlighted the critical importance of clear communication in group work. To address this, we started implementing regular check-ins and task confirmations to ensure that everyone knew their responsibilities. This change significantly improved our efficiency and coordination. The experience taught me that establishing clear communication protocols is essential to avoid misunderstandings and keep the group aligned. As a result, our communication improved, and we were able to work more effectively together. This

reinforced my belief that clear and consistent communication is foundational for successful teamwork. Moving forward, I will prioritize setting up clear communication channels from the beginning of any group project, including regular check-ins, task summaries, and encouraging open communication to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

### **Developing Critical Thinking and Adaptability**

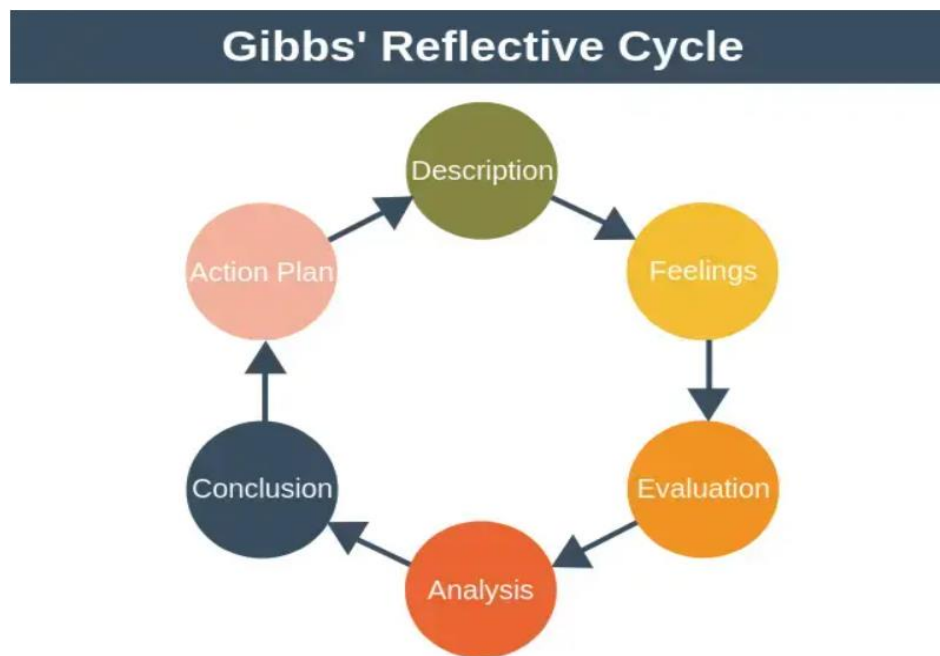
The second key learning was the development of critical thinking and adaptability. During the project, we were tasked with developing strategies to promote the Temple of Peace. I suggested implementing feedback forms to collect primary data directly from the community and later pitched the idea of crowdfunding as a way to generate more funds. I realized that to effectively promote the Temple of Peace, we needed to understand what people actually wanted and how they perceived the venue. This led me to suggest feedback forms as a way to gather this essential data. Additionally, I proposed crowdfunding as a creative solution to the financial challenges WCIA faced.

By critically analyzing the situation, I identified gaps in our approach, such as the lack of direct insight into our audience's preferences. The feedback forms allowed us to tailor our strategies more effectively, while the crowdfunding idea offered a new avenue for generating revenue. These suggestions were well-received, which boosted my confidence in my ability to think critically and propose innovative solutions. This experience taught me that approaching problems with an open mind and a willingness to explore unconventional solutions can lead to effective and creative outcomes.

Integrating feedback into our decision-making process was key to this adaptability. As Atkins et al. (2002) suggest, "When the individual uses the outcome feedback to make decisions that affect the states of the system, this completes the system feedback loop." In our case, the feedback we collected provided us with insights that were essential for refining our approach and making more informed decisions. This process reflects how outcome feedback, shaped by the complexity of the task system, can drive continuous improvement and strategic adaptation. Moving forward, I will continue to apply critical thinking to identify and propose innovative solutions, ensuring they are backed by thorough analysis and align with the project's goals.

### Valuing Reflective Practice for Continuous Improvement

The last key learning was the value of reflective practice for continuous improvement. Throughout the project, our group engaged in reflective discussions after reaching key milestones, allowing us to evaluate what worked well and what didn't. Initially, these reflective sessions seemed like they were slowing us down, but over time, I realized their value in helping us improve our work. Reflecting on our actions allowed us to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments that enhanced our overall efficiency.



**Figure 2: Gibb's Reflective Cycle (Expert Program Management, 2019).**

This process aligns well with Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which involves stages of Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, and Action Plan (see Figure 2). By taking the time to reflect on our work, we could learn from our experiences and avoid repeating mistakes. These reflective practices proved to be an essential part of our group's success, as they fostered a culture of continuous improvement. This experience taught me that reflection isn't a waste of time it's crucial for ensuring continuous growth and improvement. It helped us refine our strategies and improve our collaboration as a team. Moving forward, I will ensure that regular reflection sessions are integrated into any group project I'm part of and will encourage the team to approach these sessions with an open mind, focusing on how we can learn and improve together.

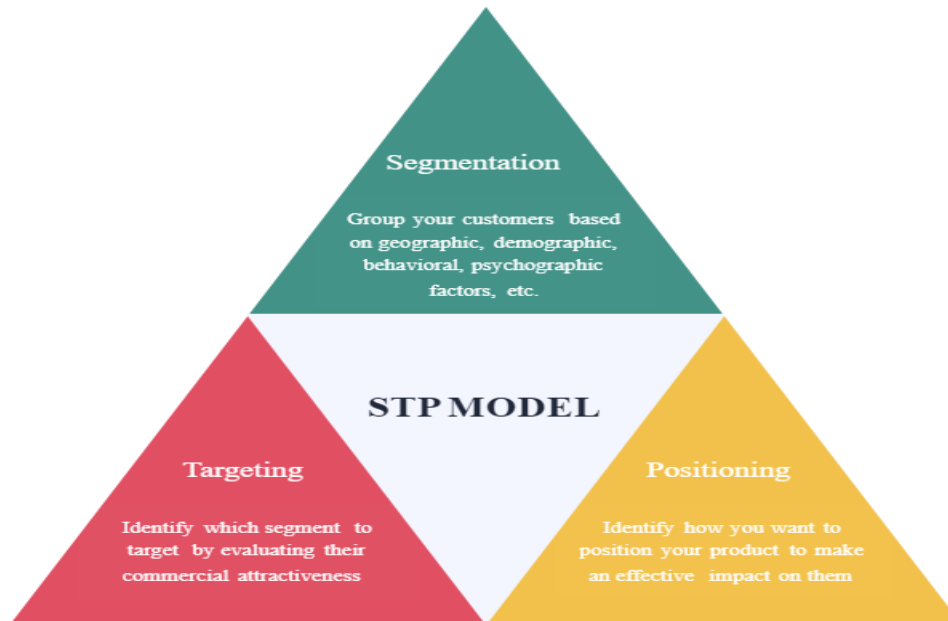
## **Application of MBM**

### **Applying Learning from Global Marketing and Strategic and Operational Decision Making**

Our marketing strategy for the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA) was informed by insights from both the Global Marketing and Strategic and Operational Decision-Making modules. These modules provided a framework to align marketing efforts with strategic goals while leveraging digital tools to enhance engagement and visibility. Although we initially considered the SOSTAC model, a strategic planning framework for digital marketing (Smith, 2011), we opted for a more customized approach utilizing multiple frameworks to meet our specific needs.

The strategy was anchored in insights from the Global Marketing module, particularly the Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) framework. This framework helped us identify key audience segments and position WCIA as a community-focused venue. We conducted a Situation Analysis to assess WCIA's market position and digital presence, employing SWOT analysis to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Porter, 2008). This analysis provided essential insights into factors affecting our strategy and guided our objectives to boost brand visibility and broaden audience engagement.

To support our strategic planning, we applied the STP model to guide our segmentation and positioning strategy for WCIA.



**Figure 3: STP Model Framework for Audience Segmentation and Positioning (Creately, 2023)**

As shown in Figure 3, the STP model allowed us to categorize audience segments based on demographic, geographic, behavioral, and psychographic factors. This approach enabled us to target commercially attractive segments and craft tailored messages that effectively positioned WCIA. This strategy aligned with principles from the Strategic and Operational Decision-Making module, which emphasized aligning marketing tactics with broader organizational goals.

We also applied concepts from the Strategic and Operational Decision-Making module, emphasizing alignment with WCIA's mission and sustainability goals. Utilizing platforms like Instagram and TikTok, we aimed to connect with target audiences and enhance community engagement. Current literature supports this approach, emphasizing social media's role in building community and enhancing online presence (Kietzmann et al., 2011). By focusing on digital tools, we maintained a consistent brand voice and maximized impact through high-quality content and strategic partnerships.

During implementation, we prioritized clear role allocation and accountability. A detailed timeline and regular check-ins kept us on track and allowed us to adapt quickly to challenges. This structured approach aligns with literature that highlights strategic alignment and operational flexibility in executing marketing strategies (Kaplan and Norton, 2008).

Finally, we implemented control measures to monitor strategy effectiveness. Regular analysis of social media metrics, such as engagement rates, follower growth, and demographics, provided insights to refine our tactics.

This continuous process aligns with contemporary research on data-driven decision-making, emphasizing the use of metrics to adjust strategies to ensure alignment with organizational goals (Pauwels, 2014).

By integrating insights from both modules, we developed a cohesive digital marketing strategy for WCIA. While we initially considered the SOSTAC model, our approach ultimately combined marketing frameworks and decision-making tools that aligned more closely with our project goals. This strategy enhanced WCIA's digital presence and fostered deeper community engagement, contributing to the organization's long-term sustainability.

### **Personal Contribution and Application of Analysing Financial Performance**

In addition to our team efforts, I personally managed the financial aspects of our strategy. Applying the "Analysing Financial Performance" module, I calculated key financial metrics, like the gross profit margin, to assess the financial viability of our marketing activities. Using PowerBI, I created bar charts and line charts to visualize financial trends and project potential returns on investment. These visual tools were essential for communicating our financial strategy to stakeholders, aligning marketing investments with WCIA's financial goals.



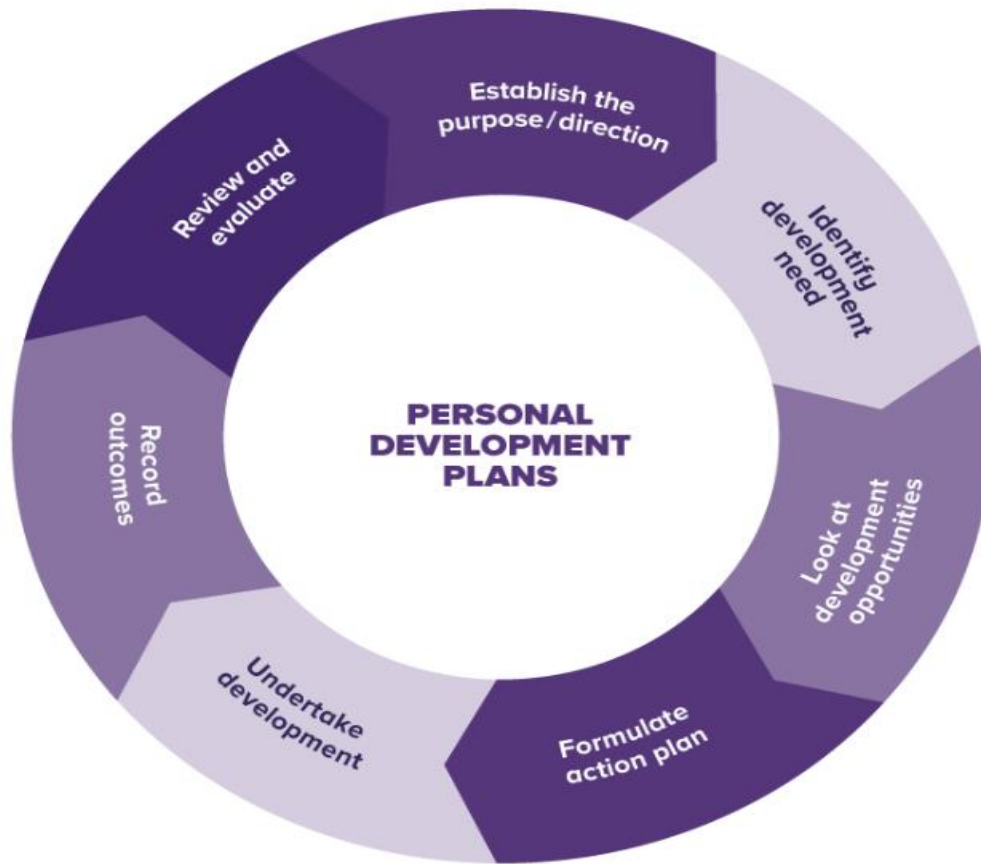
**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP)**

To ensure my Personal Development Plan (PDP) is effective and actionable, I am utilizing the SMART framework. This approach helps me set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals for my professional growth. By clearly defining each goal and establishing concrete steps, I can track my progress and make necessary adjustments.



**Figure 4: SMART Goals Framework outlining the criteria for setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals (SSDSI, 2024)**

As illustrated in Figure 4, the SMART framework ensures each goal is well-defined and actionable. To complement this, it is important to consider the broader cycle of personal development planning.



**Figure 5: Personal Development Planning Cycle (LinkedIn, 2019).**

Figure 5 illustrates the stages involved in developing a PDP, including assessment, goal setting, action planning, implementation, and evaluation. This cycle provides a continuous process of improvement, ensuring that each goal is set effectively and pursued with a clear plan for development and ongoing evaluation.

In the short term, I am focusing on enhancing my strategic decision-making skills. Although I have strong analytical skills, I recognize a gap in applying strategic frameworks effectively in complex scenarios. To address this, I plan to enroll in an advanced strategic management course and analyze case studies from organizations facing similar challenges. My goal is to complete this course within three months and apply these concepts to real-world projects. I will reflect on my decision-making improvements in ongoing projects and seek feedback from mentors to gauge my progress.

Another short-term goal is to improve my financial analysis and interpretation skills. While I possess basic financial literacy and analytical thinking, I need a deeper understanding of financial data interpretation and projection. To bridge this gap, I will attend a financial analysis workshop designed for non-financial managers.

Additionally, I will take on the responsibility of managing a budget or financial project to apply these skills practically. According to Brigham and Ehrhardt (2016), a solid grasp of financial management principles is crucial for making informed decisions. Their book, *Financial Management: Theory & Practice*, provides foundational knowledge that will help me enhance my skills in this area. My target is to achieve this within six months. I will assess my progress by comparing my pre- and post-training financial analysis capabilities and evaluate these skills' effectiveness in ongoing projects.

Additionally, I aim to develop advanced data-driven marketing strategies. Although I have a foundational knowledge of marketing and creativity, I need to improve my ability to leverage data for comprehensive strategies. To achieve this, I will enroll in a data analytics course focused on marketing and lead a marketing research project involving customer data collection and analysis using tools like Google Analytics or CRM systems. My goal is to complete these activities within four months and measure the effectiveness of my strategies by evaluating engagement and conversion rates before and after implementing data-driven techniques.

In the medium term, my objective is to strengthen my client communication and presentation skills. Despite strong interpersonal skills, I recognize a gap in presenting complex information clearly and persuasively to clients and stakeholders. To enhance these skills, I will attend a public speaking and presentation skills workshop and practice regularly with peers. Nancy Duarte's (2012) book, *Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences*, emphasizes the importance of storytelling and visual elements in engaging and persuading audiences, providing a framework I plan to adopt in my presentations. I aim to achieve this within two months and will gather feedback from peers and clients to evaluate my presentation's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Furthermore, I seek to become proficient in multicultural management, recognizing a gap in cultural empathy and understanding. With an open-minded approach, I plan to attend courses on multicultural management and engage in cross-cultural communication exercises to develop a deeper understanding of cultural nuances. My goal is to achieve this proficiency within two years, continuously evaluating my communication effectiveness in multicultural settings.

In the long term, I aspire to develop advanced strategic leadership skills. While I have some experience in leadership, I need to cultivate more advanced capabilities in strategic planning and team management. To accomplish this, I will enroll in a strategic leadership program and seek mentorship from experienced leaders. I aim to complete this program within three years. Throughout this period, I will reflect on the challenges I face in leadership roles and evaluate my progress in strategic planning and team management skills.

By following this structured development plan and adhering to the SMART framework, I am committed to closing these skill gaps and enhancing my competencies. This approach ensures my goals are clear, achievable, and aligned with my professional aspirations, preparing me for future challenges and opportunities.

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# APPENDIX

## Key Learnings – Practical Approach

Event	Details	Action/Analysis	Conclusion	Action Plan
<b>The Importance of Clear Communication</b>	The event is about experiencing misunderstandings and confusion in the group project due to a lack of clear communication. This occurred in the early stages when roles and responsibilities were not clearly defined. The confusion led to frustration, duplicated tasks, and incomplete work.	The lack of clear communication caused "noise" in the communication process, leading to misunderstandings (as per Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model). I implemented regular check-ins and task confirmations to ensure everyone understood their roles, which improved efficiency and coordination.	The outcome was a significant improvement in team communication and collaboration. The change reduced misunderstandings and allowed the team to work more effectively together. I felt relieved and more confident in our ability to communicate effectively. In retrospect, better communication protocols should have been established from the beginning.	To improve, I will ensure clear communication channels from the start of any project, including regular check-ins, task summaries, and open communication. This will prevent misunderstandings and keep the group aligned.
<b>Developing Critical Thinking and Adaptability</b>	The event involved developing strategies to promote the Temple of Peace. I proposed using feedback forms to gather primary data and suggested crowdfunding to address financial challenges. This helped us understand audience preferences and	I analyzed gaps in our approach, such as lacking direct insights into audience preferences. I then proposed feedback forms and crowdfunding as creative solutions. This approach boosted my confidence in thinking critically and proposing innovative solutions.	The feedback forms provided valuable data for tailoring our strategies, and crowdfunding offered a new revenue stream. These ideas were well-received and demonstrated the importance of adaptability and critical thinking in achieving creative outcomes. I learned that innovative solutions can come	Moving forward, I will apply critical thinking to identify gaps and propose innovative solutions, ensuring they are backed by thorough analysis and align with project goals. Continuous learning and adaptability will be key areas of focus for personal development.

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	explore innovative solutions.		from critically analyzing the situation and being open-minded.	
<b>Valuing Reflective Practice for Continuous Improvement</b>	The event revolves around engaging in reflective practice sessions after reaching key milestones in the project. Initially, these sessions felt like they were slowing us down, but they ultimately helped improve our work by identifying areas for improvement and making necessary adjustments.	Reflecting on our actions helped us evaluate what worked well and what didn't. We used Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to structure our reflections, allowing us to learn from our experiences and avoid repeating mistakes.	The outcome was an enhanced culture of continuous improvement within the team. Reflection sessions helped us refine strategies and improve collaboration. I felt more aware of the benefits of reflection and the importance of continuous growth. If done differently, we could have integrated reflective practices earlier in the project.	I will ensure regular reflection sessions are part of any group project I'm involved in and encourage the team to approach these sessions with an open mind. This practice will focus on learning from experiences to foster continuous improvement.

### Application of Learning from your MBM (theoretical approach)

Details	Module	Actions/Analysis	Conclusion	Information Sources
Our marketing strategy for WCIA was guided by insights from both the Global Marketing and Strategic and Operational Decision-Making modules. We initially considered using the SOSTAC model, but opted for a more customized	<b>Modules Used:</b> Global Marketing, Strategic and Operational Decision-Making  <b>Theory/Model Used:</b> STP Framework (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning), SWOT Analysis	The strategy began with the STP framework to identify key audience segments and position WCIA effectively. We conducted a Situation Analysis and SWOT analysis to assess WCIA's market position and digital presence, guiding our objectives to	The outcome was a comprehensive digital marketing strategy that enhanced WCIA's online presence and community engagement. By aligning marketing efforts with WCIA's mission and sustainability goals, and leveraging digital tools, we fostered	Smith, 2011; Porter, 2008; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Kaplan & Norton, 2008; Pauwels, 2014

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approach utilizing multiple frameworks to suit our specific needs.		increase brand visibility and audience engagement.	deeper community engagement and contributed to long-term sustainability.	
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### Personal Development Plan (practical approach)

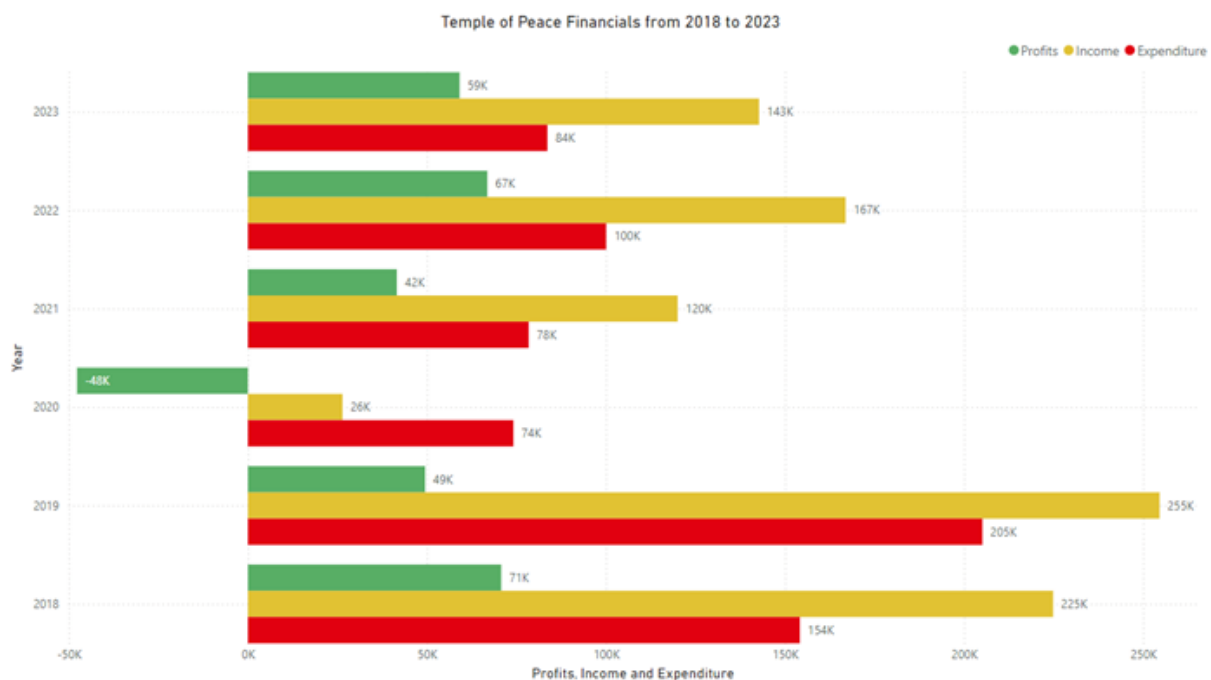
Career Goals	Existing Strengths	Gaps – Development Goal	Action/Steps	Resources/Support Needed	Target Date	Reflection/Evaluations
<b>Short - Term</b>	Strong analytical skills, basic financial literacy, foundational knowledge of marketing and creativity.	1. Enhance strategic decision-making skills to apply strategic frameworks effectively. 2. Improve financial analysis and interpretation skills. 3. Develop advanced data-driven marketing strategies.	1. Enroll in an advanced strategic management course; analyze case studies. 2. Attend a financial analysis workshop for non-financial managers; manage a budget or financial project. 3. Enroll in a data analytics course focused on marketing; lead a marketing research project.	Strategic management course, financial analysis workshop, data analytics course, mentors for feedback.	1. 3 months 2. 6 months 3. 4 months	1. Reflect on decision-making improvements and seek feedback from mentors. 2. Compare pre- and post-training financial analysis capabilities and evaluate effectiveness. 3. Measure marketing strategy effectiveness by evaluating engagement and conversion rates.
<b>Mid-Term</b>	Strong interpersonal skills.	Strengthen client communication and presentation	Attend a public speaking and presentation	Public speaking and presentation skills workshop, book: "Resonate: Present Visual	2 months	Gather feedback from peers and clients on presentation effectiveness;



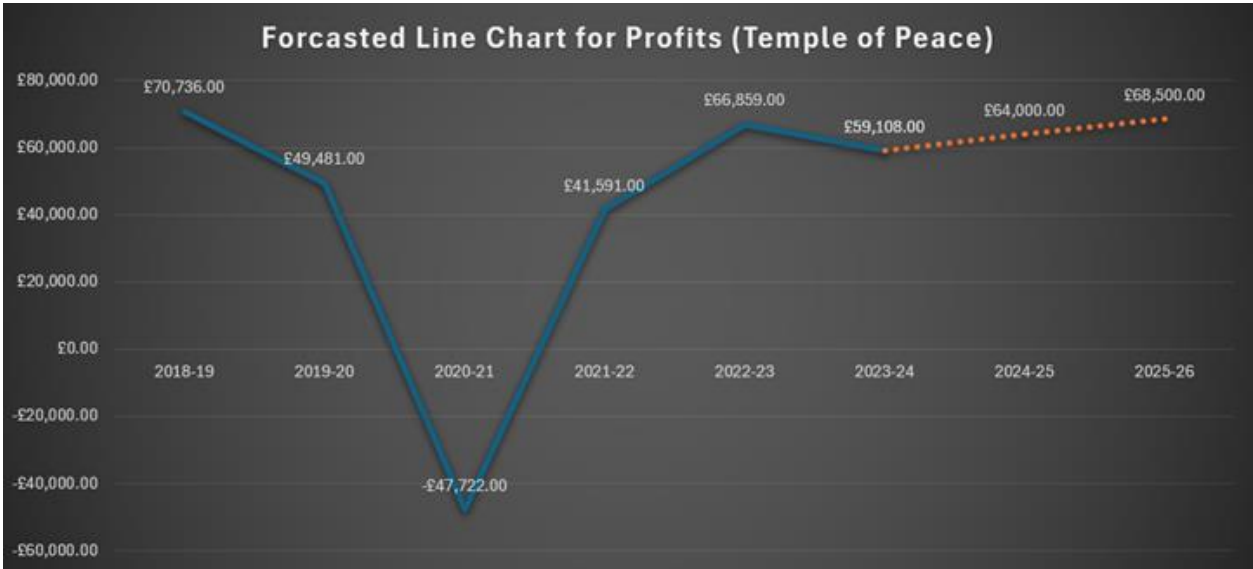
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		skills to present complex information clearly and persuasively.	skills workshop; practice regularly with peers.	Stories that Transform Audiences" by Nancy Duarte, peer feedback.		identify areas for further improvement.
<b>Long-Term</b>	Some experience in leadership.	Develop advanced strategic leadership skills to enhance strategic planning and team management capabilities.	Enroll in a strategic leadership program; seek mentorship from experienced leaders.	Strategic leadership program, mentorship from experienced leaders.	3 years	Reflect on leadership challenges and evaluate progress in strategic planning and team management skills.

### Graphs for Financial Performance of WCIA



Bar Chart of Financials from 2018-2023



Forecasted Line Chart for Profits