

Strengths & Weaknesses: A Self-Assessment

An analysis of one's managerial and career readiness is a key element in preparing for faculty review and for review by potential employers. This requires self-knowledge, analytical thinking, and introspection, and also the help of self-assessment inventories to accomplish. According to the International Association for Management Education, a Skill and Outcome Assessment Framework consisting of six areas of professional development – communication, leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, self-management, and professionalism – should be addressed in creating and understanding one's readiness. By using this framework and the self-assessment inventories, I have discovered my strengths and weaknesses within the different areas.

The first area that we shall look at is communication. According to the framework, communication is the “ability to share ideas and findings clearly in written and oral expression, and with technology utilization.” Therefore, within this category, we must look at writing, oral presentation, giving and receiving feedback, and technology utilization. By considering these four areas, I believe I have a very solid communications background. Throughout high school, I was involved in programs that required big oral presentations *at least* once a year. Through this, I have developed and improved my presentation skills, taking constructive criticism seriously, and incorporating those advices into my next presentations. Those presentations were also technology-based presentations, therefore requiring the use of some form of presentation program (eg. Microsoft PowerPoint). Because of the repetitive use of PowerPoint, I have become fairly acquainted with its ins and outs, and have also been able to help out my fellow classmates and friends with it. Writing, I would say, would be one of my weaknesses. It is hard for me to put into words my thoughts and feelings. This is probably caused by the lack of vocabulary. Also, writing in a professional manner is an area that I would like to develop on. The only way to improve in my writing skills is to write more and in anything that I write, try to make them as professional as possible. Furthermore, having others read over my work and give suggestions will help me greatly.

Leadership, the “ability to influence and support others to perform complex and ambiguous tasks” is the second area of assessment. The areas under leadership were ones that I was not quite aware of, with diversity awareness as a slight exception. Therefore, the use of the self-assessment evaluations was very helpful. I've always felt that I had a strong sense of diversity awareness. However, in looking at the *Diversity Awareness* evaluation, it is the opposite. On the other hand, I am not racial or prejudice, therefore when being a leader, I will not be biased in the treatment of my subordinates. I will be able to create a fair working environment with equal opportunities. My biggest weakness is in my global awareness and readiness as seen in my *Global Readiness* results. My knowledge of other nations and cultures is fairly low, which will create a problem when working globally. Not only am I not well informed of things outside the nation, but I also have the tendency to not be updated in my own nation's current events. At this moment, there is just very little interest in such information. This is definitely bad, because everyone should be well informed about their surroundings so they can better adapt and react to certain situations. This is an area that I must work hard on. I should begin with current events in the U.S. and then slowly expand the horizon to global matters. One characteristic I have noticed is that when working in a team/group, I tend to be a follower and take instructions. However, when no one decides to step up to be a leader, or if things aren't getting done, I will automatically try to take things under control in order to accomplish our goal up to expectations.

Being able to work in a team is very important in the business world; many things cannot be accomplished by just one person. The next aspect, teamwork, is defined to be “the ability to work effectively as a team member and a team leader.” Sometimes I like to work by myself and other times I like to work in a group. It really depends on what type of project I am working on. This is supported by my results in the *Cultural Attitudes Inventory*, where I fell in between individualism and collectivism. However, when working in a team, my strength is the ability to consider everyone’s opinion and allow others to contribute their thoughts in what I am working on. I will work hard, knowing that I cannot let my team members down since everyone’s participation is crucial in the completion and success of the project. Although I tend to stay away from being the team leader, the *Team Leader Skills* assessment proves that I can be a team leader since my scores were fairly high for all the different categories. An important skill for a leader is conflict management and consensus building. Since I am able to relate well with others (*Emotional Intelligence* inventory), I am able to solve conflict within the group and help create a consensus between the members. I try to keep a harmonious environment within the team so optimum performance can be achieved. A weak point in being a team member would be my self-motivation to work. Although I know the importance of my participation, I have trouble motivating myself to start on my own part, but I always complete things in time. Procrastination is a major problem and can affect me being a team leader. However, if I was in the leader position, I know I will be able to motivate myself better, because I know that I have others that need me, and I cannot let them down.

The next area is critical thinking (ability to gather and analyze information for creative problem solving), which I believe is one of my weaker points. The stronger points within this category is the ability to gather information, and being able to differentiate between fact and inferences as seen in the *Fact and Inferences* assessment. I have the tendency to be very critical about information that I receive, not accepting it completely once presented to me. I like to have other facts and proofs to solidify its relevance and accountability before completely accepting it. Another strong point I possess is the ability to problem solve. Many times, I have run into thing that did not turn out the way it is suppose to, and at the spot, I had to resolve the problem and speculating another procedure or path to take. I also realized that I like to problem solve. Whenever one of my roommates encounters a problem, I quickly speculate in resolving it. Most of the time I can come to a conclusion within seconds, and other times it takes a bit more thinking and turning the case over in my head. The biggest problem I have is decision-making. I have always been known to be quite indecisive. It is a matter of not wanting to choose the wrong decision and thus causing chaos. At times I might think too much into the problem and allow my imagination to take over, making it much harder to make a decision than it has to be. This fear of making the wrong decision can be a good thing, since rash decisions will not be made on my part, but instead, thoroughly thought out procedures will be implemented.

One of the most important areas one needs to focus on is self-management, which is the “ability to evaluate oneself, modify behavior, and meet obligations.” You must be able to manage yourself before you can manage others or have others take you as a serious manager, one who they can trust and look up to. My strength in this field is having a good ethical understanding and behavior because I was raised under strict morals. Ever since I was young, I have been figuring out what was right and what was wrong; what to do and what not to do. I am also very quick to adapt to changes as I have noticed over the years. It comes in handy, especially in the business world where nothing is for certain and things can change any moment. Being flexible can be advantageous since it will allow for better problem solving and decision making to put things back on track. The weakness I have in this area would have to be the

ability to tolerate turbulence as seen in the *Turbulence Tolerance Test*, where I only have an average ability to tolerate turbulence. In addition, the *Stress Self Test* has revealed that I have a Type A behavior, which means I tend to bring unnecessary stress to myself. Having so much stress can also decrease my tolerance level and I might release the stress on my subordinates, which would not be a good idea. This unnecessary stress can be caused by a lack of good time management, so things are never on time, causing me to stress out, and ultimately causing me to have a lower tolerance. This can be fixed by trying to keep things flowing on a timely manner.

The last area of professional development is professionalism. This involves the ability “to sustain a positive impression, instill confidence and advance in a career.” My strength in this area would be my belief that I have control over my life, my own destiny as seen in the *Who’s In Control?* assessment. The test says that I have a moderate internal locus of control, because I do believe that you have to have a little bit of luck, not everything can be obtained by pure will and perseverance. This then influences my personal initiative and thus acts as a self-motivator, since nothing can be accomplished or advancement in a career won’t happen unless I go out and pursue it. It will also give me something to work towards. I would not just be working blindly. The major weakness I possess is low self-confidence. This is very bad for a manager, because subordinates need to trust your judgments, and if you yourself do not fully believe in them, then how can they in turn fully believe in you? A major influence to this is the fear of making the wrong decisions. Having those doubts creates uncertainty and thus low self-confidence. This, however, can be avoided if enough information is available to confirm my decisions. Moreover, this can be a positive factor, because I will then be more willing to seek opinions from others, and therefore be able to create stronger relationships with them since it shows that their opinions and inputs are important.

Currently, I am a third year undergraduate student here at the University of California, Irvine. With the remainder of my time as an undergraduate student, I am looking into finding a part-time job or internship as soon as possible. My goal is to start working at a part-time job beginning Spring Quarter 2004. My prospective outlook is to find a part-time job that will be able to give me training that can be applied to future occupations. However, any type of job should suffice, since it will also build experience. Hopefully, this coming summer I will have an internship that deals with business aspects in a company. The company I have in mind is Tokyopop, which produces English translations of Japanese comics. Besides a formal occupation, I am looking into joining PUSO (a pre-health organization) and Alpha Phi Omega (a co-ed service fraternity). Hopefully I will be able to obtain some type of leadership opportunities while being a member, or maybe even try to be an officer. The main goal, though, is to meet more people, create networks and also to develop my communication skills, which especially includes overcoming my shyness. I chose to apply for an internship at Tokyopop and also join PUSO and Alpha Phi Omega in order to further development my managerial skills, because I believe that if I’m going to dedicate myself, I rather do so in something that I will enjoy doing. Learning in an enjoyable environment is much more effective and motivational.