
Contents

Before you begin	vii
Topic 1: Recognise your personal traits	1
1A Your values and attitudes	2
1B Personal strengths and weaknesses	7
1C Understanding what motivates you	15
Summary	18
Learning checkpoint 1: Recognise your personal traits	19
Topic 2: Apply self-awareness at work	21
2A Actions to improve self-awareness	22
2B Applying self-awareness	28
2C Strategies for ongoing improvement	38
Summary	42
Learning checkpoint 2: Apply self-awareness at work	43

1A

Your values and attitudes

The Macquarie Dictionary describes an attitude as a position, disposition or manner with regard to a person, issue or thing.

Here is some information to help you explain attitudes and values, and identify the differences between them.

Values	Attitudes
<p>Values are the worth, merit or importance that you place on an action or thing. Commonly held values include honesty, integrity, love, compassion, respect, and a desire for fairness and justice.</p> <p>It is a personal regard you have for something, based on its worth or usefulness to you.</p>	<p>A personal attitude can be a viewpoint that is positive or negative. For example, one person may appreciate receiving constructive criticism about how to perform a task better, while another may take this as a personal attack.</p>
<p>You are mostly not consciously aware of your values because they are internal feelings. However, they underpin your beliefs and the actions you take. They will affect the way you approach your work or respond to other people.</p>	<p>Attitudes generally arise from values.</p> <p>You may express your attitudes through your behaviours such as how you communicate with others and the ways you act.</p>
<p>Values are less likely to change over time because they are deeply embedded internal feelings that have been developed over a lifetime.</p> <p>Values are guiding principles that arise from your life experiences and interactions with others. You may find you have similar values to your family, largely due to the way you were brought up.</p>	<p>Attitudes can change with new experiences. They develop as you experience new things and interact with others. For example, an employee may hold a negative attitude towards management because they once worked under a supervisor whose poor leadership meant they missed out on a performance reward. This attitude may change with time in response to a new, more positive experience.</p>

1B

Personal strengths and weaknesses

When you are good at something and enjoy it, it is a true strength.

Daniel Goleman, the psychologist and author of books on emotional intelligence, identified self-awareness as being made up of:

- emotional awareness
- accurate self-assessment
- self-confidence.

Self-awareness is about knowing your emotions, your personal strengths and weaknesses, and having a strong sense of your own worth. If you can recognise your personal strengths you are likely to be more motivated and interested in your work. This increases your engagement, meaning you are more likely to perform work tasks to your full capacity and enjoy the challenges of your work.



Your personal strengths and weaknesses

Self-awareness involves using thoughts, emotions and behaviours to improve and better understand yourself.

Personal strengths are tasks or actions that you do well. These include your talents, knowledge, and skills. You use these traits and abilities to complete tasks, work cooperatively with others, and achieve your personal and work goals.

Your personal strengths are more than just what you are capable of. They may be personal traits that you already possess or ones that you wish to develop and become more proficient at.

Personal weaknesses are those areas you identify that you can improve on as part of your personal development action plan. Self-awareness means you will be able to detail ways you can improve or correct these weaknesses. Here are some examples.

Personal strengths	Personal weaknesses
Patience	Impatience
Respect	Evading responsibility
Determination	Hypersensitivity
Dedication	Shyness
Honesty	Lack of confidence
Versatility	Overconfidence/arrogance
Loyalty	Fear of failure

Commitment can be defined as the level to which an employee:

- is connected to their job and feels a sense of purpose and value in what they do.
- is dedicated to the organisation as a whole, its management, a supervisor or a particular work team
- believes in the organisation's goals and purpose
- has a desire to achieve the goals of the organisation
- has a positive attitude towards work
- has a good work ethic.

Level of commitment

Different levels of commitment will affect the likelihood an employee will remain with an employer.

Your level of commitment to your work is dependent on many factors, such as your level of attachment and sense of loyalty or bond to the organisation.

The following outlines the three levels of organisational commitment developed by John Meyer and Natalie Allen. You may recognise some of these characteristics in your colleagues.

<p>Affective commitment Staying because you want to stay</p>	<p>This refers to an employee who has a high level of commitment to the company because they identify strongly with it and agree with its objectives. They are bound to an individual to the organisation, making them more loyal and less likely to leave.</p> <p>An employee with this level of commitment would describe their job as, 'I can't wait to go to work each day.'</p>
<p>Continuance commitment Staying because of personal benefit</p>	<p>Employees experiencing this level of commitment will stay at a company because of a personal benefit, not due to a sense of loyalty. For example, an employee may have invested many years in a company building up leave entitlements, employee benefits and a good salary. It may be more beneficial for the employee to stay than to leave, so they remain but may not feel compelled to perform at a high level.</p> <p>An employee with this level of commitment would describe their job as, 'I need to work here because the pay is good and I want to retire early'.</p>
<p>Normative commitment Staying because you feel you should stay</p>	<p>This occurs when an employee believes they must stay. For example, an employee may feel a sense of obligation to stay with their employer during its time of need even though it is no longer advantageous to do so. They may fear the potential disappointment in their employer or teammates.</p> <p>An employee with this level of commitment would describe their job as 'I can't leave because my boss depends on me'.</p>

You may not fit wholly into one category, and may have a combination of these commitment levels to an organisation. Which level of commitment do you think best reflects your attitude to work?

Example

Using your personal resilience in times of stress

Violet is feeling embarrassed about her unprofessional behaviour during a meeting. She reacted badly during the staff meeting when her manager told her about a possible merger with their parent company. She had been worrying about her job security for a few months, ever since the rumours began. When the possible merger was discussed, she got visibly upset and angry, raising her voice when asking questions. Her manager suggests that she go home early.



The following day she has had time to reflect and review what happened. She realises she should not have spoken out like she did and been so emotional in her response. She reacted quickly and didn't give herself time to think and consider the information before acting.

Her manager has been understanding and, after a face-to-face meeting, she now feels calmer about the future. Violet finds change difficult and recognises the strong emotions that rise up during these situations. Violet has now taken a mental note on several things she has learned about herself as a result of this situation. She knows she needs to practice controlling her emotions so as not to have a similar outburst in future. She decides that taking a breath, physically relaxing her body and pausing are all useful strategies to help her overcome her emotions.

Violet is going to continue to work on developing her resilience and not automatically react negatively when she gets stressed.



Practice task 2

Part A

Read the following statements about personal strengths and weaknesses. Select true or false for each one.

Question 1

You are being adaptable when you are able to quickly swap between work tasks because there are urgent jobs that require your attention.

True

False

Question 2

Tony has a flexible attitude because he often changes his working hours to suit the workload of his department.

True

False



Learning checkpoint 1

Recognise your personal traits

1. Explain how your values and attitudes can impact your work.

2. Explain how your values and attitudes can impact on the way you work with others.

3. For each of the following personal strengths, identify one way this trait can enhance your work performance:

- a. Flexibility/adapatabilty

- b. Commitment

Here is an example of a personal development action plan.

Goal	Objective	Action step – what is required	Personal reflections	Feedback from others
To react less emotionally when I get pressured with work	Control my emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause and take a breath before letting the stress build up. • Identify the triggers that make me react. • Don't take work home; instead use that time to relax. 	In the week before the project deadline, I didn't take work home with me, even though I was tempted to do so. Instead, I used the time to forget about work and went swimming and out to dinner. I have never missed a deadline because I am an efficient worker, and this project is no different to the last ones. I can always ask Georgia to help me with the final steps of the task.	Frank congratulated me on my reliability for always meeting deadlines and for the quality of my work. Georgia said she was always willing to help me out and I only had to ask.
To get more experience so I can apply for other positions	Become more adaptable and gain more exposure to new skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take initiative and offer to help on other projects. • Speak to my manager and explain my goals. 	I have an appointment for my performance review with my manager next week. I will seek her advice about how to increase my skillset. I want to have the opportunity to experience new challenges.	My manager and I discussed my personal abilities and skills, and my desire for new challenges. She encouraged me to apply for other positions in the organisation. She helped me to develop a plan for the experience I want to have, and to outline what I would like to get from the experience. I will start by shadowing an employee in another department.

Here is an example of how to evaluate your work performance for generic work skills.

Personal skills	Your comments and examples	Manager feedback/ comments and examples
<p>Communication</p> 	<p>I feel I can communicate clearly with my colleagues in meetings.</p> <p>I send professional emails and reports to customers.</p>	<p>Maintains open, effective communication with all employees and customers.</p> <p>Written and verbal communication is clear, concise and understandable.</p>
<p>Teamwork</p> 	<p>I work well with my colleagues and enjoy sharing ideas and getting feedback from others.</p>	<p>Willingly cooperates, shares information, assists and is tolerant of colleagues, vendors and clients in daily transactions.</p>
<p>Reliability</p> 	<p>I have a strong work ethic and can be relied on to complete tasks by the deadline.</p>	<p>Can be relied on to complete tasks and follow up as needed.</p>
<p>Adaptability/ flexibility</p> 	<p>I like the variety of changing tasks and can adjust my priorities to suit current customer needs.</p>	<p>Easily adjusts to changes in routine, assignments and company/client needs, and continues to be productive.</p>
<p>Initiative</p> 	<p>I put forward ideas and suggestions in meetings, such as ways of improving a process.</p>	<p>Voluntarily recommends resourceful, alternative or original ideas/procedures for improving work or solving problems.</p>

Self-reflective questions

- What have I achieved recently?
- What areas do I need to work on?
- What areas have I improved in?
- What benefits have any changes I've made brought to the organisation or to myself?
- What personal strengths can I develop further?
- Where are there gaps that have weakened my ability to achieve my personal goals?
- How did I handle unforeseen difficulties and challenges?
- What feedback have I received from others and has this been implemented, including negative feedback and a need to improve my skills?
- Are there any specifically targeted training activities I can undertake to help me develop my self-awareness?
- Is more training required to do my job effectively?
- Who can help me achieve my goals?

Personal development strategies

You may need to contribute to your own professional development.

Your supervisor may make suggestions about how you can continue to develop your personal skills. They may suggest further accredited training, professional development activities, or suggest that you be given a mentor who will guide and monitor your progress.

A mentor is usually a more experienced staff member or supervisor. Other ideas for professional development activities include:

- a session with an in-house specialist or expert, such as a HR professional trained in communication or other areas of personal development
- attending a conference
- attending a talk from a motivational speaker
- completing an online training module.

For any strategy to be successful it is important to have the support of your organisation.

There may be statements in position descriptions, policies and procedures that address professional development for staff. Your manager will need to consider your availability and the cost. You can always take on additional learning and development of your own initiative.

Some businesses require employees to complete a professional development plan. This requires you to outline the purpose of the activity and how the organisation will benefit from you taking part. For example, you may need to consider the following:

- How will you implement what you have learnt into your work tasks?
- How will this enhance the workings of the organisation?

It can also be a requirement that your experience is shared with others through a team meeting or report.

