Learning Objectives

On successful completion of this module, students will be equipped with the tools they need to strategically shape their future careers. They will have gained an in-depth understanding of different career theories and models and be able to apply these to and reflect on their own personal situation. This will enable them to picture their aspired career and formulate a clear concept.

Students will have critically examined the concept of career planning, enabling them to make well-informed decisions for their professional development. They will appreciate the importance of strategic career planning and understand how to incorporate it into their individual career plans.

Furthermore, students will understand the importance of self-assessment and be able to apply it to themselves, having identified their unique skills, interests, values, strengths and competencies.

Students appreciate the value of building and maintaining their own personal brand. They understand global career principles and are adept at operating in an international environment. They have also explored a variety of job-hunting and application processes in a national and international context.

# Unit 6 – Developing a Career Strategy and Managing Your Career

Study Goals

On completing this unit, you will be able to ...

… understand the importance of career capital – from both the employee’s and the employer’s perspective.

… name the various career goal levels and distinguish these from private-life goals.

… make a distinction between objective and subjective career success and understand the need to consider each of them separately.

… use the Ikigai model to evaluate your own competencies and interests.

… understand the advantages and the risks of personal branding for your own career.

# 6. Developing a Career Strategy and Managing Your Career

### Introduction/Case Study

Having graduated with a degree in computer science, Kim began her career at a small tech start-up, where she acquired solid expertise and refined her programming skills. Her exceptional performance and enthusiasm for new technologies did not go unrecognized, and she soon found herself involved in a series of challenging projects. This allowed her to broaden her knowledge and deepen her web development and database design skills.

Throughout her career, Kim has actively invested in her education, attending training courses, workshops and conferences to keep abreast of the latest trends and technologies in software development. She also taught herself new programming languages and frameworks with a view to broadening her expertise and enhancing her versatility as a developer.

Over time, Kim set herself a series of clearly defined career goals. She aspires to a position as technical director in an established, medium-sized software company. To achieve this goal, she has developed a personal development concept which entails acquiring leadership skills as well as project management and team leadership experience. She actively develops her communication and presentation skills to help her persuade others of her ideas and solutions.

Kim regularly reflects on her career success and personal branding. She takes the time to analyze and learn from her past successes and challenges. She also asks managers and colleagues for feedback to help identify her strengths and improve her weaknesses. She cultivates a professional network by participating in industry events, where she can forge contacts and exchange ideas. She also uses online platforms to showcase herself as an expert and share her expertise with others.

Kim understands that personal branding is an essential part of her professional development. She is careful to ensure that her online profiles and communications reflect her expertise, enthusiasm and professionalism. She positions herself as a committed developer who is continuously evolving and adding value for her employers and projects. Kim knows that her personal branding helps her tap into new career opportunities and advance her career.

Overall, Kim has created a solid foundation for her career development by building her career capital, setting clear career goals, and continually reflecting on her career success and personal branding. Her expertise, willingness to learn and professional approach make her a sought-after software developer and will help her achieve her long-term career goals.

## 6.1 Career Capital

For some time, employees with sought-after skills have been given access to opportunities in other companies and other countries. In the labor market, this value is known as career capital – the combination of individual characteristics, skills, competencies and personal networks developed by an individual over the course of their career (Böhmer & Schinnenburg, 2018). This career capital (also known as **human capital** in its broadest sense) is specific to each individual and can be applied in a work context. Its value for the employer equates to the employee’s market value (Litz, 2012, p. 65).

**Human Capital**

A person's knowledge, skills, and education (encompassing formal education, informal learning and development experiences).

Employees’ career capital is becoming increasingly important, especially when there is a shortage of skilled workers. The more you define your own goals and values, the more work experience, expertise and networks you have, and the more you engage in personal development, the more career capital you accumulate, giving you the freedom to choose where to work (Litz, 2012). People with extensive career capital tend to achieve better positions, higher salaries, and greater career success than those with less career capital.

Litz (2012, pp. 65–71) describes four types of career capital: