

# The professional profile of PhD-holders

**Patrycja Romaniuk**

## Patrycja Romaniuk Sustainability

patrycja.romaniuk@engees.unistra.fr

### Core business

#### PHASE 1 Skill development

I developed the skill to set ambitious yet realistic professional goals by continuously assessing industry trends and aligning them with my career aspirations. To enhance my employability, I proactively sought opportunities for skill development and leveraged my networks to broaden my expertise. I embraced mentorship, receiving guidance to refine my goals and approaches effectively. This adaptability allowed me to transfer my skills across different fields and appreciate the international dimensions of my career. I managed my professional growth through strategic planning and continual learning, ensuring my skillset, personal qualities, and achievements remained relevant and advanced.

#### PHASE 1 Evaluation

Scientific training in the doctoral school as well as preparing a dissertation is a good lesson in critical evaluation of quality of data sources as well as results of my own work. Discussing my work with peers globally outside of my institutions gives me context and validates my ideas and work. Each constructive feedback is carefully reflected upon and then integrated if relevant and adequate. I know my limitations regarding providing constructive feedback scientific to others and I work towards improving them.

#### PHASE 1 Information management

Scientific training in doctoral school and preparing my thesis in close cooperation with several scientists and under double supervision prepared me to review well SOTA, time constraints in a complex international program, and under double pressure on cotutelle, even forced efficient identification of data sources and data/knowledge management. Judging the pertinence of information is something I learn every day - I don't think this journey ever ends.

#### PHASE 1 Expertise and methods

I developed a deep mastery of my field by first grounding myself in its fundamental knowledge and key concepts, learning their historical evolution and significance. To stay current with recent progress, I regularly engaged with contemporary research through journals and conferences. My understanding of research activities took on an international perspective as I collaborated with global peers. Proficient in the investigative methods and techniques of my field, including mathematics and statistics, I learned to select those best suited for specific research objectives and developed the ability to consider and evaluate alternative methods. I refined my skills in problem formulation and hypothesis development through practical application.

### Personal and relational qualities

#### PHASE 1 Communication

I honed my skills in crafting persuasive presentations and communication by consistently targeting my messages to the specific needs and understandings of various audiences. I mastered the use of diverse communication tools, from PowerPoint to digital media platforms, ensuring my presentations were both engaging and informative. Additionally, I focused on maintaining a professional online identity, strategically aligning my digital presence with my career goals. My commitment to knowledge sharing within my company was demonstrated

through regular workshops and training sessions, enhancing my teaching skills. Furthermore, my proficiency in English and another world language allowed me to communicate across different cultural contexts effectively.

### **PHASE 1 Collaboration**

I developed the skill of building and maintaining cooperative networks by actively engaging in industry events and online forums, which allowed me to expand my professional connections. I strategically cultivated these relationships to benefit both my personal career and my company's goals. Recognized as an authority in my field, I frequently contributed expert insights and advice, further solidifying my reputation and network influence. Additionally, I consistently assessed potential partnerships, weighing their benefits against their limitations, and skillfully navigating both shared and conflicting interests to foster collaborative success and drive mutual gains.

### **PHASE 1 Analysis, synthesis and critical thinking**

I developed the skill of analyzing and synthesizing information through a disciplined approach to research and evaluation. By consistently reviewing both my findings and those of my peers, I honed my ability to extract and clearly articulate key ideas. I prioritized information based on relevance to specific goals, ensuring effective communication. My approach is marked by intellectual rigor and objectivity; I actively consider multiple perspectives and am willing to adjust my views based on new evidence or arguments. This openness helps me maintain reasoning that is free from dogmatic influences, allowing me to provide balanced and well-founded analyses.

### **PHASE 1 Open-mindedness and creativity**

I developed my ability to acquire knowledge and demonstrate flexibility by actively engaging in interdisciplinary activities, which broadened my understanding and approach to complex problems. My style of questioning and scientific doubt was honed through regular participation in research groups and academic discussions, fostering a constructive and critical mindset. I embraced new ideas by experimenting with innovative solutions and approaches, always ready to seize opportunities that emerged from my work. I sought collaboration on international projects to effectively interact with professionals from various cultural backgrounds, enhancing my cultural competence and adaptability.

### **PHASE 1 Commitment**

I was always privileged enough to be able to follow my internal sources of motivation. Dealing with such aspects of the job as adversity, routine, determination, failures, relying on support, and managing a challenging endeavour (my small company was competing in bids with Big Four due to the structure of the market back in the day) for 10+ years demonstrates relevant skills.

### **PHASE 1 Integrity**

Due to personal values and previous experiences that involved not just ethical consequences but tangible reputational, legal, and financial risks in case of any breach of professional integrity, I always maintain the highest professional standards. I also know the code of conduct of social scientists, especially in the case of transdisciplinary and participatory action approaches that are very ethically demanding.

### **PHASE 1 Balance**

I suffered from burnout, ironically, doing what I loved. That's the best teacher regarding personal boundaries and limitations.

### **PHASE 1 Listening and empathy**

A 3-year training in mediation, negotiation, and non-judicial conflict resolution and 2-year "train the trainer" training for facilitating and educating groups of adults to develop good listening skills and empathy. This training was followed by solving conflicts, training groups, and leading dialogues, as well as managing teams for more than 15 years.

## Business management and value creation

### PHASE 1 Negotiation

I studied Mediation, negotiation, and non-judicial conflict resolution for 3 years and earned a Master's in complex environmental conflict resolution. Then, I started to work as an environmental mediator. I deepened my skills while negotiating contracts with clients, where the value of the contract could easily reach 25000 eur (excluding contractual penalties reaching 1 mln eur) and negotiations could take a week and be accompanied by layers.

### PHASE 1 Project management

Projects I managed were mostly acquired by me, either by applying for grants or by selling my services. They also required me to buy complex services, like programming based on good-quality specifications, which I had to prepare. All my projects were subject to scrutiny (much more strict than grant scrutiny in the academic sector) from the funding body (in the case of grants) or the clients, so I had to undergo a very strict evaluation.

### PHASE 1 Managing change

To stay competitive, no matter which industry (academia, business, NGO, etc.) one needs to continuously improve. Improving anything means changing it. Change comes with resistance because change is always something unknown, so it requires knowledge on how to manage, e.g., people's emotions, how to effectively communicate, etc. Running a company for 10+ years is impossible without all these skills because the market changes too much and forces one to adapt and, therefore, manage change.

### PHASE 1 Managing risks

One of the projects I implemented was an IT service, a digital platform. The risks were numerous: the insufficient number of clients (due to flawed marketing, pricing, responding to needs, etc.), the flawed architecture of the service, the changing legal environment, and insufficient funding. All that meant very high financial risk. The platform, however, was launched and worked well enough to be later sold. CSR services were the core offer of my business.

### PHASE 1 Decision-making

Leading a company for 10+ years is the best test for decision-making.

### PHASE 1 Obtaining and managing funding

The list of funding sources where I obtained funding via writing grant applications and managed/co-managed projects: Innovative Economy Operational Programme 2007-2013, National Center for Research and Development (Social Innovation Programme), European Climate Foundation, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Swiss Contribution, EEA and Norway Grants, 7th Framework Programme of European Commission. Managing a portfolio of 40+ clients for 10+ years required skills in determining profitability etc.

### PHASE 1 People management

I spent 15+ working in teams comprising people from different backgrounds and cultures, most of the time in leadership positions. I co-directed a company for 10+ years (in equal positions), which is impossible for such a long time without effective teamwork skills. I hired a team of between 2-7 people, which required developing HR skills and was subject to legal regulations. Non-discrimination, diversity and equality was always a core standard as one of my personal values.

### PHASE 1 Producing results

Half of my professional life depended on grants (transforming ideas into applications and then implementation) and half on working with corporate clients to deliver intelligence and expertise (

transforming ideas into tangible solutions for clients). E.g., initial setbacks in selling co-authored simulation games as training tools led to rapid re-designing of them followed by many companies buying our product.

#### **PHASE 1 Intellectual and industrial property**

Setting up a company with its own know-how as a service and visual identification, working on numerous projects and clients, including partnerships with scientific institutions, on knowledge generated as a product, was a good school of intellectual/industrial property and copyright protection. I worked with stock exchange companies, where leaking any information could be considered to impact the stock exchange rate and subject to paying a 1 mln euro fine from my own pocket.

#### **PHASE 1 Customer focus**

The company I led for 10+ years operated internationally, and the work included meticulous stakeholder (not just client) management as part of the risk mitigation and growth strategy. That included continuously gathering information on their needs and expectations. My portfolio includes about 40+ clients from 15+ industries, confirmed by references, agreements, and demonstrated expertise and knowledge of marketing, although most business was generated by referrals.

## **Strategy and Leadership**

#### **PHASE 1 Strategy**

I developed this skill while working in many different organizations and with many clients, where understanding how the project fits the overall strategy is essential to keep the team motivated and the top management constantly supporting the efforts. The essential is to understand that "the language of the benefits" should be used also in the case of internal clients. Understanding formal and informal relationships between entities and individuals helped, e.g., avoiding conflicts in the team.

#### **PHASE 1 Leadership**

I was mainly in leadership positions during my professional career, especially during a 10-year entrepreneurial period, managing a team of several people. In unstructured teams (for example, during training), the group often looks to me to provide direction and leadership. Even if not officially in a leadership position, I build trustful relations legitimizing leadership activities.