

# The Personal and Professional Identity Narrative (PPIN)

## *INSEAD Management Acceleration Programme*

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the *Personal and Professional Identity Narrative* is to provide you with a “working document” that will help you to orient yourself as you make personal and professional decisions in the course of your life. If you take the process of reflecting on your life seriously, the *PPIN* can help you to better understand the key events of your life and their continued influence, and to explore possibilities for the future.

### PROCEDURE:

We are asking you to complete a 10 to 15-page draft of your *PPIN* before you arrive to the programme. You will have the opportunity to develop and re-visit your *PPIN*, and to modify the contents as you reflect on your learning from the programme. A relatively complete working document would be a narrative of between 15 and 20 pages. We recommend that you *avoid* using PowerPoint presentations, lists of bullet points, or cutting and pasting sections of your résumé.

### DESCRIPTION:

The *PPIN* will be a *narrative* essay describing:

- (a) where you have come from, i.e., the central influences—people and events—in your life,
- (b) where you are now in the course of your life, and
- (c) the general direction in which you feel you are headed, i.e., your sense of a provisional life plan, however indistinct it might truly feel.

***It is especially important that the narrative covers material of a personal nature, and includes rich examples, for example, descriptions of significant events in your life, the people involved, and your emotional reactions to them.***

The accent for the *Narrative* should be on the personal rather than the professional. It is *not* a *curriculum vita*, although you may include some professional background and future career intentions. A *curriculum vita* represents our *persona*, i.e., the mask that we all wear and that we prefer to reveal to others. The *PPIN* is concerned with the real person behind this mask.

More specifically, the narrative is an autobiographical sketch relating the major influences in our lives—the influences that have brought us to the present, the goals that we intend to pursue in our personal and professional development, and how we intend to achieve these goals. The narrative is a “working document” and is intended for your benefit. It is **completely confidential**. You will not be asked to share it with anyone except your personal coach.

The *PPIN* is an integral part of the ‘Setting Your Leadership Agenda’ process within the MAP. We strongly encourage you to prepare the document well and to use it beyond the programme as a reference for your personal and professional development—as well as for periodic clarification of your respective goals and responsibilities during your evolving personal, family and career life. Taken seriously, the *PPIN* can continue to be a valuable point of orientation for personal and professional development over your lifetime.

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## Sample Guidelines

Below is a sample guideline for a 10-15 page initial *PPIN* draft. It is meant only to give you an idea of what the structure might look like; you should not feel constrained by the format.

My personal identity: A brief general introduction covering: Who am I? Where did I come from? What's important? What is not important? Where am I now in my life?

My family background: How did I experience my family life growing up? What are the important family stories?

Significant events in early life: Describe those events that had the most profound impact on your life. Illustrate them and include their emotional effect at the time, and their continued influence.

Significant relations in my life: Describe them—important people and your relationship to them—including their emotional impact in the past and in the present. What regrets do you have, i.e., things you wish you *hadn't* done, or things you wish you *had* done but didn't?

My professional identity: Describe in one sentence what you do professionally. Then elaborate on your feelings about work. What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? What would you rather be doing? What other roads do you wish you had taken?

Individual Interests: Describe things that are of deep interest to you personally that *do not* involve your work or your relations with family and friends. What do you like to do only for yourself and your own pleasure?

My future: Describe a picture of your future: Where are you headed in life? What are you attempting to do? What are your concerns? Try to imagine not only what you would like to "do", but also what "lifestyle" you would like to have, i.e. what do you want your life to "feel" like?

General Questions: You might want to consider the following questions as you address the above areas:

What successes did I have?

What were my biggest failures?

What regrets do I have? What could I have done differently?

What are the relations among my personal life, my professional life, and my own private individual interests?

It is helpful to illustrate any general statements you wish to make about yourself and your life with examples—rich descriptions of events, the people involved, and your thoughts and feelings about it all. While we encourage you to feel free to follow any structure you feel fits you best, it is usually more interesting to consider and write about the influence of emotionally significant people and events, and to look for and describe patterns occurring in different periods/areas of your life, rather than to follow a strict chronological flow.