

ABSTRACT

Competencies based relationship between employees and organisation tends to maximise profits to both internal as well as external environment. The paper attempts to discuss the attributes of the competencies, its significance for the development of an employee as well as of an organisation. The prerequisites for an effective competency model have also been discussed.

Keywords: Competency, Individual Career Development, Organisational Development.

Introduction

Competency is the combination of knowledge, skills, attitude and personality of an individual as applied to a role or job in the context of the present and future environment, that accounts for sustained success within the framework of the organizational values. The characteristics of competencies are motives, traits, self-concept, knowledge and skill; however a person for performing different jobs may require different competencies. Similarly, to perform the same job by different people individually may not exactly require similar competencies since individuals use different methods / means to accomplish the given task.

Steve Garrett, a Senior Management Consultant of Career Systems International, defined that "Competencies include the collection of success factors necessary for achieving important results in a specific job or work role in a particular organization. Success factors are combinations of knowledge, skills and attributes (called as KSAs) that is described in terms of specific behaviors and are demonstrated by superior performers in those jobs or work roles. Attributes include personal characteristics, traits, motives, values or ways of thinking that impact an individual's behavior".

Davis D Dubois Ph.D., LPC, President of Dubois and Associates, Rockville, Maryland, consulting in the area of competency-based human resource practices, defined competencies as the tools that individuals use for successful or exemplary performance. Competencies are the traits or characteristics including an individual's knowledge, skills, thought

patterns, aspects of self esteem and social roles that they use to achieve successful or exemplary performance of any type.

Objectives of Competency

- To understand the concept of competency and competence based HR practices.
- To understand the various approaches towards building Competency Model.
- To design Competency Model Structure.
- To create Scales and its Range for competencies in the Model.
- To understand and select Data Collecting Methods.
- To build Competency Model.
- To carry out the integration of the applications of Competency Model in Recruitment & Selection, Performance Management, Training & Development, Deployment, Promotion etc.
- To automate the Competency Model.
- To learn how to develop mapped competencies.

Relation between Competencies and Individual Career Development

First and foremost, competencies must be demonstrated by individuals. Perhaps the most common place where they are demonstrated is within the scope of a particular job. However, competencies are also developed and demonstrated by individuals in volunteering roles in the community, professional

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associations, sports participation, and even within one's own home life.

One of the first encounters with competencies for most individuals is in securing employment with a new organization. Organizations that are purposefully using cutting-edge methods to choose talent for positions or project roles are engaging in what is called "competency-based interviewing and selection". These interviewing and selection methods are being used not only for hiring external applicants, but also for staffing internal roles.

Many organizations that use competency-based interviewing and selection are also using the same competencies later to assess performance, to encourage future development plans for individuals, and to plan for succession in the organization. Therefore, the individual employees in such an organization will have an ongoing need to use and map their competencies.

Need for Individual Employee to map their Competencies

By mapping competencies, an individual

- Gains a clearer sense of true marketability in today's job market; once the individual knows how his/her competencies compare to those that are asked for by the job market in key positions of interest.
- Appears as a "cutting-edge" and well-prepared candidate, who has taken the time to learn about competencies, investigate those in demand, and map his/ her own competencies prior to interviewing.
- Demonstrates self-confidence that comes from knowing one's competitive advantages more convincingly, and from being able to articulate those advantages in specific language. Secures essential input to resume development - a set of important terms to use in describing expertise derived from prior career experience. Gains advanced preparation for interviews, many of which may be delivered using a competency-based approach called "structured behavioral interviewing".
- Develops the capability to compare one's actual competencies to an organization or position's

required/preferred competencies, in order to create an Individual Development Plan.

Many organizations today are using the process of 360 degree feedback to compare an individual's self assessment of his/her own performance against key position and organization competencies. The 360 feedback received is then used as input to the Individual Development plan. David McClelland takes the position that "definitions for various competencies, which contain real-life examples of more competent behavior, provide specific guideposts as to how to develop the competency. The feedback information also provides a basis for career counseling or explaining why a person should or should not be promoted." (McClelland, 1994, p. 10)

Claudette Nowell-Philipp, organizational career consultant, offers strong philosophical argument for the importance of an individual knowing and mapping his/her competencies as part of ongoing career planning inside an organization. Nowell-Philipp says that, in today's organizations, especially those going through fundamental changes, it is essential to be able to "articulate your value-add and who you are, as a person and as a professional, in language that is common and accepted in the organization" (Nowell-Philipp, 2002). That prerogative implies the importance of competency-based self presentation: in one's resume, in interviews, and in public functions where introductions and credibility are important.

Categories of Competencies in an Organization

There are two broad categories of competencies in an organization: -

- Personal functioning competencies.
- Functional/Technical competencies.

Personal functioning competencies include broad success factors not bound to a specific work function or industry and often focus on leadership or emotional intelligence behaviors.

Functional/technical competencies include specific success factors within a given work function or industry.

It is seen that a basic set of four competencies which would differentiate the top performers from the rest in most organizations are Initiative, Influence, Result orientation and Concern for quality.

In addition, research on the importance of "emotional intelligence" to organization success is starting to identify a number of emotional intelligence competencies in particular four categories i.e. Self Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management.

Based on performance outcomes, competencies can be classified into

- Threshold competencies.
- Differentiating competencies.

People with threshold competencies show normal performance results like achieving the assigned targets etc, whereas people possessing differentiating competencies perform exceptionally well above the assigned targets by fixing their own benchmark standards.

Again, based on universality, competencies can be classified as:

- Generic competencies.
- Specific competencies.

Ability to communicate effectively is a generic competency used across several vocations and at different levels whereas ability to code instructions into computer language is a specific competency used only by computer programmers.

Competencies can also be classified as

- Higher order competencies.
- Lower order competencies.

For managerial people in leadership roles, the motives, attitudes, traits and self-concept (higher order) are more important than competencies (lower order) like knowledge and skills because managerial work involves getting the work done through people. Whereas for workmen in assembly line who work under strict supervision, the knowledge and skills become higher order competencies and the rest are in lower order. However, in either case, knowledge and skills are easier to develop by training and development and identify and assess than motives, traits, attitudes and self-concept.

In 2003, T V Rao, Chairman, TVRLS and Former Professor of IIMA and Founder, National HRD Network has classified the competencies into

four groups namely :

- Technical i.e. dealing with the technology associated with the function, role and task.
- Managerial or organizational i.e. dealing with managerial aspects, organizing, planning, mobilizing resources, monitoring and systems use.
- Human or behavioral i.e. competencies that are personal, interpersonal and team related.
- Conceptual or theoretical i.e. competencies like visualizations and model building.

Benefits for the organization by using competencies

Competency based human resource systems ensure that the people who get hired have the potential to succeed. It has been estimated that the wrong hiring costs 1.5 times that person's annual salary. And that does not take in to account the frustration of an individual trying to succeed in the wrong job. Competency-based systems can also be used to provide appropriate development to help employees realize their potential and to provide appraisal, feedback and coaching to improve productivity. Improvements in productivity directly contribute towards maximization of wealth of the organization. In addition, competencies provide employees with an objective, define target for development and realistic career goals.

Competencies can be the basis of individual selection and career development. Demonstrating appropriate competencies can help candidates get hired and position them for future opportunities. Demonstrating a desire to improve related competencies generates development on the job and makes performance management meaningful. Competencies are increasingly being used to select and develop leaders and for succession management. Competency-based internal selection makes career mobility across functions easier and helps individuals overcome any discriminatory practices in the organization. A validated competency model is an objective way to integrate and ensures fairness of talent management initiatives within the organization. In short, knowing and demonstrating competencies provide substantial benefits to individuals who want to be seen as qualified and valued accordingly.

Competency Model

A competency model is a model that describes the requirements and attributes for competent human performance in one or more roles or performance settings. As such, the elements of a competency model communicate the circumstances and conditions of performance.

The elements of a competency model depend upon the purpose the model is to serve. Therefore, to have the most forceful impact upon the user, every competency model should have the following characteristics:

- (i) The significance of the competency model should meet the organization's strategic business objectives.
- (ii) It must include the expected outputs or results of the performance.
- (iii) It must mention clearly the roles that performers will assume while performing duties.
- (iv) The model should include the competencies that must be used for fully successful performance.
- (v) In the model, for each competency, behavioural indicators are included which indicated if the competency is appropriately being used for performance.

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