

How to Develop a Competency Framework in Your Organisation

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A Competency Framework is an inventory of competencies and associated behaviours that are directly linked to an organisation's overall strategic priorities and the work that needs to be done to achieve them and to levels of proficiency for each behaviour. According to **Roe (2002)**, **competencies** are a set of *personality traits, knowledge, skills, abilities* and *behaviours* that an employee applies in performing his/her work and are the key employee related levers for achieving results that are relevant to the organisation's business strategies. A competency model is developed through competency profiling. Competency Profiling is the process of breaking the job into its constituent parts and identify specific skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours needed to perform the same successfully.

Objectives of Competency Framework Development

- To develop a competency framework that is aligned with your organisation's vision, mission, values, objectives and strategy
- To assess your organisation's current competencies and to identify the competencies required and gaps in alignment with your organisation's strategy
- To develop a validated competency framework for your organisation which highlights specific competencies upon which a supervisory and management development programme could be built
- To identify and define the current core and technical competencies
- To develop competency indicators that are observable and definable actions which show what performance should look like
- To develop a competency rating scale, which allows for determining the level at which an incumbent has a specific competency in order to determine any gaps and possible developmental needs for improvement in performance

Proposed Steps for Developing the Competency Framework

Phase.1. Project Organisation and Initiation

This step marks the development of your competency development plan and it outlines all the parameters of the competency development process and the business case for having a competency framework. During the drafting of the competency framework plan all the key stakeholders should be involved and this promotes their engagement and buy-in to the project.

Phase.2. Organisational Analysis and Review

At this stage there is need to have a closer look at the context of your organisation with regards to:

- organisational processes and systems
- organisational structure
- relevant documents which have a bearing on the development of your competency framework

Phase.3. Strategic Review and Analysis

This steps involves the review and analysis of your organisation's mission, vision, values, corporate goals, strategic drivers and strategic barriers. This gives whoever is developing your competency framework an appreciation of your business model and help them to align it with your business strategy.

Phase.4. Establish the Core Competencies

Core Competencies are those competencies that contribute the most towards achieving strategic results. Employees are the face of the organisation. They are expected to exhibit a set of competencies and behaviours that reflect organizational character to certain standards which are non-negotiable and these include among others ethical conduct and integrity.

Phase.5.Establish the Job Families

This step involves establishing the job families within your organisation. A job family is a collection of related jobs that requires employees having similar knowledge, skills and abilities at different levels. Thus, a job family has jobs at progressing levels defining a career path for an individual, with incremental requirement of the similar knowledge, skills and abilities. All jobs in a given job profile require similar educational background, experience, competences, and market value.

Phase.6. Identify Technical Competencies

Technical Competencies outline the areas of competence within specific job functions. They are determined by responsibilities and the accountability levels of that role.

The following activities will be used for gathering the data.

- conduct Subject Matter Expert Interviews
- conduct Strategic Job Analysis Interviews
- conduct Behavioural Event Interviews
- conduct Surveys
- literature Review of Competency Model Data Bases

Phase.8. Develop the Competence Structure

This involves categorising competencies into competency type, sub- competency cluster, competency definitions, competency level and appropriate behavioural indicators.

Phase.9. Competency Assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses to determine how further development could bridge the competency gaps. This will be done through the following activities:

- conduct psychometric tests
- conduct personality tests
- conduct assessment centres
- conduct 360 degree feedback
- qualifications and experience health assessment
- performance gap analysis

Phase.10. Develop Competency Development Plans

At this stage you need to define the personal competency development plans for the different employees to address the results of the assessment. The plans will prescribe or recommends activities that seek to bridge the competency gaps that will have been identified.

Phase.11. Validation of the Competency Model

Having identified the distinguishing characteristics of superior performers, the model should be validated. This is done by subjecting the tentative model to a pilot study.

Phase.13. Mapping the Competency Framework to other Human Resources Functions

It is the process of aligning the competency framework with other human resources functions.

Phase.14. Develop a Competency Transition and Sustainability Plan

The actual implementation of the competency framework should be informed by the competency priority implementation matrix.

References:

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