

Skills matrix: Everything you need to know

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Though two people may work in one organization or even the same department, they probably carry different sets of skills. After all these differences are what make an organization. When we, therefore, define operations in an organization or when we map a project and all its steps, we need to understand the skills required for those processes and each step that will be involved in the projects. Through understanding the necessary skills necessary, it is only when we can assign the right personnel to each project. All this leads to the necessity of what is known as a skills matrix.

A skills matrix is therefore defined as:

A visual tool that shows the tasks and skills required for specific roles and the current competency and skill level of each employee for each task.

For any project, it is always important to know exactly which skills, competencies, expertise, qualifications, and certification all your organization’s staff possess. Skills Matrices are a very useful tool to keep track of all these aspects. As the name suggests, skills matrices are a record of employees in a matrix form.

AG5 skills matrix www.ag5.com

Team Leader: Eric Dept: Production | Team A Key: 4 3 2 1 0

Trainer Expert Unsupervised Beginner No knowledge

Name	Function	Start production lines	Line 1	Line 2	Line 3	Line 7	Line 9	Inspect production lines	Retool production lines
Peter	Operator B	0	3	4	2	0	0	1	0
Liam	Operator A	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
Arnold	Production worker B	0	4	0	0	3	0	2	4
Luke	Operator A	3	3	3	0	0	1	2	0
Eva	Operator A	0	2	2	4	0	0	0	2
Sophie	Production worker A	4	2	0	1	0	1	1	0
Lewis	Production worker	0	4	0	2	3	0	2	2
Dan	Operator B	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Lenny	Operator B	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0
Current min. level 2:		4	7	4	4	2	1	3	3
Required min. level 2:		3	4	5	4	4	2	3	2
Gap (current - required):		1	3	-1	0	-2	-1	0	1

Benefits

Helps you

1. Identify the right people.
2. Identify missing competencies
3. Identify the gap between employees, teams, and departments
4. Track employee development
5. Help HR to find the right candidate
6. Track your key staff members

How to Create a Skills Matrix

1. Determine the skills needed

At this stage determine all the skills required for your project or projects. Start with the most essential skills in the beginning. Unambiguously define the skills, that is, define the skills as specific as possible. Define what is expected of each skill. This can be done with the help of more experienced employees. Liaise with them on what type of skills will be essential for the projects in place.

Another way with the advancement in technology is to make use of a skills database for your organization.

Competences Administration 

Categories	Select categories to change	Add category
Competences	Soft skills  	
Level of competence	Hard Skills  	
Skills	Hard Skills > Databases  	
	Hard Skills > Programming  	

Photo Credit: Vitamins (Skills Database)

Excel or Google spreadsheets can be of use for creating the database of skill sets too.

Grade and gauge each team member's current level of skills

For different businesses and industries grading systems might be different, as well as for different roles and departments. Determine the best grading system for your organization. For example, you can decide to use the following grading system.

Novice – A person might have some know-how of applying the skill but might still need help in certain

aspects.

Professional - a person who has experience in utilizing the skill and can work independently. Solves problems proactively. Can guide and support more junior people performing related tasks.

Expert - a person who has a lot of experience in applying the skill in practice. The person will now be able to communicate and even coach other employees. Normally the person has an official certification in the area of expertise.

Leading-edge expert - a person who understands the bigger picture. Now communicates proactively and shares information in the area even via blogs. The person keeps the skill up to date and continues upgrading in the area.

Using this grading, indicate each employee's level of expertise on the skills matrix. This can be done using 5 steps.

1. **Self-evaluation** - an employee grades each skill personally.
2. **Manager evaluation** - manager grades employees' skills.
3. **Team or client evaluation** - you can collect team or client feedback and use it to evaluate employees' skills.
4. **Skills assessment** - employees need to complete the tests or quizzes to determine their skills level.
5. **Certification** – This is a fast and accurate method to evaluate specific skills though not all employees have it nor can all skills be certified.

Visualize data

This can be an important area to summarise the level of skills that each employee carries. You can calculate the sum of weights for each level of expertise of your employees.

For example, you can give the levels of expertise a numeric weight value:

Novice – 1

Professional – 2

Expert – 3

Leading-edge expert – 4

Getting the sum for the weights of each employee can help you visualize the level of expertise that each employee carries.

You could also define a potent skills loss for your organization. Usually, such a case happens when you

have 1 or only a few employees with this skill. This is especially crucial if this skill is important for the department.

Skill matrix and competency mapping

This is a process of identifying the specific skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors required to operate effectively in a specific trade, profession, or job position.

Skills and competency maps are designed according to the client's specific needs. For example, a restaurant employee needs specific skills different from an HR assistant. They can also be designed according to the specific set of skills that are required for a certain position within the organization.

This process helps:

1. Identify key attributes (skills, knowledge, ability, and behavior) that are required to perform effectively.
2. Analyze individual's Strengths and areas of development for better understanding leveraging for career growth.
3. Evaluate the suitability of an individual for and identified a role/position consistent with the required competencies.
4. Anticipate developmental needs to keep your organization future-ready.

Performing Skills and Competency Mapping

1. Set up a list of key competencies.

Product designers have not come to a universal agreement on their key competencies. Competencies change constantly, and so should your competency management. Find necessary tools and adapt them to your needs. These competencies can include but not limited to,

- General User Research
- User Needs Evaluation
- Usability Evaluation
- Metrics and Measurements
- Information Architecture
- Prototyping
- Interaction Design
- Visual Design
- Writing
- Client Management
- Professional Cooperation
- Business and Strategy
- Development

- Workshop Facilitation

2. Define the key competencies practically

This involves defining the competencies above in line with your organization's goals. For example design in a woodwork shop is different to that in an IT industry.

3. Map individuals to the key competencies

The next step will be to identify individuals and map them to specific competencies according to the skills that they possess. This can be done through skills assessment procedures. Self-assessment can be of use also in this stage. See 5 steps of skills assessment above.

Skills matrices are not only important in identifying new individuals suited for projects in your organization but on a bigger picture, they can also be of great importance in identifying skills gaps that might exist within your organization and also potential skill loss that might occur in your organization in the case that an individual leaves. Therefore it is key that each organization implements this technique for present and future use. The flexibility of this technique ensures its relevance even in the future as you can continue to modify it.

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<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/skills-matrix-everything-you-need-to-know>