

Implementing Competency Mapping in an Organization

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1. Introduction

“Right Person For The Right Job.” This proverb is a dream for every manager of the company. The head of the company always desires to have a Mr. Right for the particular job, so that he does his task in an efficient way. But is this possible?

The answer is ‘Yes’. In today’s competitive global business environment, complex and sensitive business processes and fast moving technology systems can compromise overall quality integrity. The solution to the problem is Competency Mapping. The rising interest in competency mapping is direct fallout of the dynamic changes that the corporate world is witnessing today. Some insights into how far the concept has travelled and the reason for its current popularity has been explained.

Competency mapping is about finding ideal behaviors and personal skills which distinguish exceptional and good performance from the average. This helps in setting standards of behavior and thereby performances for the average work force to follow.

It plays vital role in selecting, recruiting and retaining the right people. When the competency required for a particular position is mapped, an accurate job profile is created. With the job profile well defined, the entire recruitment process becomes easier. The candidate who applies for the position is aware of what the position demands. The interviewers who interview the candidate are sure of what to look for in him. This increases the chances of retention as the new employee and the company knows what to expect from each other. but, sadly about the roles desired by the company and the expectations by the new employees is a cause of disappointment for both the employee and employer after the employee joins the company.

Definition of a competency

A competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation. Here Underlying characteristic means the competency is a fairly deep and enduring part of a person’s personality and can predict behaviour in a wide variety of situations and job tasks.

Causally related means that a competency causes or predicts behaviour and performance. Criterion-referenced means that the competency actually predicts who does something well or poorly, as measured on a specific criterion or standard.

1.2 Underlying Characteristic

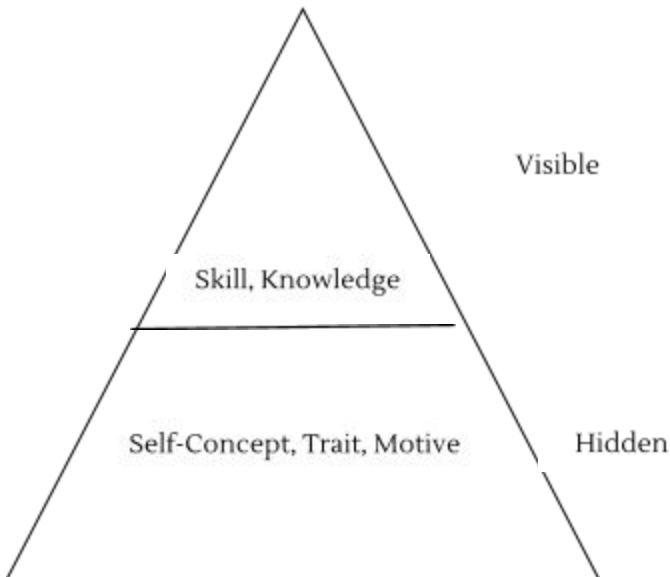
Competencies are underlying characteristics of people and express the “ way of behaving or thinking, generalizing across situation, and enduring for a reasonably long period of time.”

Five types of Competency Characteristics

1. **Motives:** The things a person consistently thinks about or wants.
2. **Traits:** Physical characteristics and consistent responses to situations or information.
3. **Self Concept:** An individual’s values, attitudes or self-image.
4. **Knowledge:** Information an individual has in specific content areas.

5. **Skill:** the ability to perform a certain physical or mental task.

The type or level of a competency has practical implication for human resource planning.



THE ICEBERG MODEL

As illustrated in diagram, Knowledge and skill competencies of an employee tend to be visible and relatively surface and so are relatively easy to develop. Training is the most cost-effective way to secure these employee abilities. Whereas, Self-concept, trait, and motive competencies are more hidden “deeper and central to personality. As these competencies are at the base of the personality iceberg model and are difficult to assess and develop, it is most cost-effective to select for these characteristics.

Types of Competency Mapping

Core Competencies:

- Internal capability that is critical to the success of the business.
- Core competencies define what an organization values most in its people.
- e.g., an organization might want its people to possess Teamwork, flexibility and communication skills.
- Organizational competencies that all individuals are expected to possess.
- Core competencies are not fixed, they must adapt the changes in the company’s environment.
- New circumstances and opportunities always happened with the business , so its main competencies will have to adapt and change it with flexibility.

Professional / Functional Competencies:

- These competencies are grouped for each job within the organization. e.g., Competencies for H.R. Manager or Competencies for an Operations Manager.
- The goal is to optimize performance by having the technical skills to perform a job.

Threshold Competencies:

Threshold competencies means the characteristics required by a job holder to perform a job effectively. It represents the essential characteristics, that everyone in a job needs to be at least minimally effective – e.g., ability to read, but that does not distinguish between a superior performer & an average performer. E.g., Threshold competency for a

sales person is knowledge of the product or ability to fill invoices.

Behavioural Competencies: Refer to competencies required in terms of behaviour for a particular role. e.g., Building & Maintaining relationships is an important behavioural competency for an IT Manager as the job requires developing constructive, cooperative working relationships with people at all levels.

Differentiating Competencies:

These competencies distinguish a superior performer from an average performer. E.g., Achievement orientation expressed in a person's setting goals higher than those required by the organization, is a competency that differentiates a superior sales performer from the other average sales persons in the organization.

Need for Competency Mapping

1. With global economy and the world becoming a global village, firms have become more aware of the need for having competent employees and developing distinguished competencies for every organization. This need arose due to the following reasons:
2. Increased cost of manpower
3. Need for ensuring that competent people are available for performing various critical roles.
4. Downsizing adds to the consequent need to get a lot of thing done with fewer people and thus reduce manpower costs and pass on the advantage to the customer.
5. Recognition that technology, finances, customers and markets, systems and processes can all be set

right or managed effectively if we have the right kind of human resources.

- The need for focus in performing roles-need for time management, nurturing of competence, increased emphasis on performance management systems.
- And recognition of the strategic advantage given by employee competencies in building the core competencies of the organization.
- In good organizations with competent HR managers, competency mapping should already be in existence. Typically, HR directors and their top management have always give attention to competencies and incorporated them in their appraisal system. For an instance , when L&T, LIC or NDDDB, Bharat Petroleum ,HLL etc. updated their performance appraisal systems, they stressed on the assessment of competencies. The following figure summarizes the need for competency mapping

Advantages of Competency Mapping

There are several advantages of competency mapping over traditional job analysis. The following section analyses each of them in relation to the company, the managers and the individual employees. The section also gives a comparative view of the competency based approach and the job analysis approach.

For the company

The advantages of competency mapping for the companies or organizations are as follows:

- Establishes expectations for performance excellence
- Improved job satisfaction and better employee retention

- Increase in the effectiveness of training and professional development programs because of their link to success criteria.
- Provides a common understanding of scope and requirements of a specific role
- Provides a common, organization wide standard for career levels that enable employees to move across business boundaries
- Help companies “raise the bar” of performance expectations
- Help teams and individuals align their behaviours with key organizational strategies

For Managers

The competency mapping provides following advantages to the managers:

- Identify performance criteria to improve the accuracy and ease of the selection process
- Provide more objective performance standards
- Easier communication of performance expectations
- Provide a clear foundation for dialogue to occur between the managers and employees and performance, development and career-oriented issues

For employees

The employees in an organization get the following advantages by competency mapping:

- Identify the behavioural standards of performance excellence

- Provide a more specific and objective assessment of their strengths and the tools required to enhance their skills
- Enhances clarity on career related issues

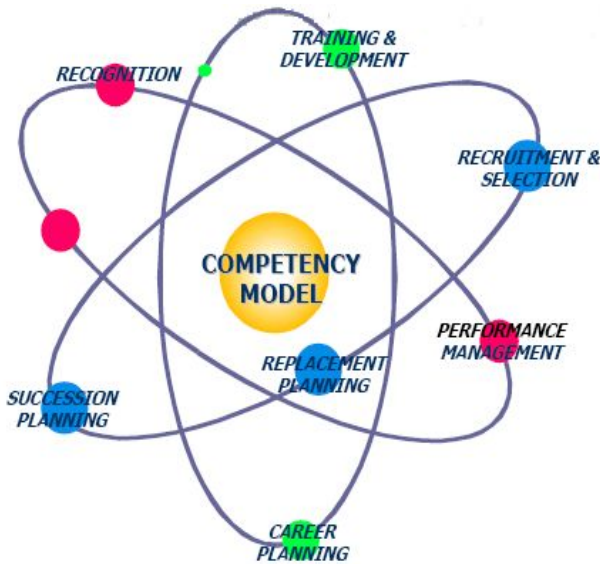
Helps each understand how to achieve expectations.

Disadvantages of Competency Mapping

In spite of the several advantages offered by competency mapping, there are few drawbacks to the approach. Some of these are discussed below:

1. competency mapping may be complicated, especially when conducted by an organization is that there may be no space for a person to work in a field that would best make use of his/her competencies.
2. If the company does not respond to competency mapping by reorganizing its employees, then it can be of little short-term benefit and may actually result in greater unhappiness on the part of individual employees.
3. If too much emphasis is placed on 'inputs' at the expense of 'outputs', there is a risk that it will favour employees who are good in theory but not in practice and will fail to achieve the results that make a business successful.
4. They can become out of date very quickly due to the fast pace of change in organizations and it can therefore be expensive and time consuming to keep them up-to-date

Areas of Implementation



1. Recruitment and selection

Competencies can be used to build a template which may use in recruitment and selection process. Information on the level of a competency needed for effective performance would be used to find out the competency levels that latest hires should possess. Depending upon the accepted definition, competency data may take the form of behaviors, skills, abilities and other characteristics.

Competency based selection can be a way to gain competitive advantage. Some of these advantages are listed below

- ◆ A firm that knows how to assess competencies can effectively hire the best at a reasonable price, for example hire under- priced but highly entrepreneurial MBA's from lesser-known business schools.

- ◆ There is high turnover due to high failure rate among new hires. The organization needs to identify new hires with the potential to become future managers or leaders.
- ◆ A gap between the competencies needed and what the organization can hire for indicates the training new hires will need.
- ◆ A lengthy training period may transpire before new hires become productive. New hires with the competencies to do a job become fully productive faster.

2. Training and Development

It involves identifying gaps and helping employees develop in the right direction. The competency profile knowledge for a position lets persons to compare their own competencies to those needed by the position or the career path. Training or development plans could focus on those competencies needing improvement.

If the training programs can be aligned to the development needs emerging out of the appraisal system and to the market led training needs they can contribute better to both individual and business objectives. This can be achieved in the following manner:

- ◆ Firstly determine the competencies for a particular position
- ◆ Secondly identify the competencies of the person holding that position
- ◆ By mapping the competencies, identify gaps in terms of the competencies for that role and the competencies of the person doing that role to diagnose the training and development needs

- ◆ Identify the most appropriate training and development methodology for each trainable competency
- ◆ To attract more competent than average employees
- ◆ To attract more competent than average employees
- ◆ To reward for results and competencies developed
- ◆ To motivate employees to maintain and enhance their skills and competencies regularly
- ◆ To attract more competent than average employees

By rewarding employees who develop relevant competencies the organization can benefit by improving its own capability to face the future.

3. Career and succession planning

It involves assessing employees' readiness or potential to take on new challenges. Determining a person job fit can be based on matching the competency profile of an individual to the set of competencies required for excellence within a profession. Individuals would know the competencies required for a particular position and therefore would have an opportunity to decide if they have the potential to pursue that position or not.

4. Rewards and Recognition

Competency based pay is compensation for individual characteristics for skills and competencies over and above the pay a job or organizational role itself commands. One way of improving employee performance is by recognizing and rewarding effort. Competency pay is the best way to do so.

Various elements are considered for arriving at compensation increase. Enhancement in competencies has to be one of them. There is a need for competency based compensation system.

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5. Performance Management System

Performance has two dimensions:

- ◆ Achieving business results
- ◆ Developing individual competencies

These days performance appraisal is seen by managers and employees as a bureaucratic "paperwork" exercises that they do not take seriously because it has little impact on employee development.

Competency based performance management would:

- ◆ Focus on "HOW" of performance and not on "WHAT" of performance i.e. not on results but how the results are achieved
- ◆ Link to development of the individual and not just rewards

Competency based Performance Management System transfer the emphasis of appraisal from organization

results to employee behaviors and competencies demonstrated which helps to identify development gaps.

Conclusion:

The null hypothesis which was done at the beginning of research methodology that competency mapping is very effective was not found to be true on the basis of analysis of data interpretation. The another one which was competency mapping process leads to develop employees competencies was also found to be correct. Thus, it can be said that both hypothesis were proved.

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