

**Competency Mapping: Harnessing Talent**

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**Introduction**

The economic downturn in the current scenario has created a situation for companies to scale down various overhead costs to meet their growth requirements. It is also important for organisation's to sustain their competitive edge in the industry by investing in learning and development programs that will empower employees to build on their strategic career objectives. To identify the right fit for the right job is a matter of concern for most organisations especially in today's economic crisis. As far as meeting an individual's career aspirations are concerned, the organisation gives an employee the perspective of what is required from him/her to reach a particular position, it drives them to develop the competencies for the same.

In an era of cut throat competition, companies are putting tremendous effort to hire competent employees and to develop relevant competencies in their existing employees which is one of the few ways in which companies can gain competitive edge over each other. It is also equally imperative for a firm to define a set of core competencies which corresponds with its key market differentiators and this is where competency mapping plays a key role. Competency management is said to encompass in itself all methods and instruments used by a company to systematically assess current and future competencies.

**Importance of the Study**

The economy around the world has put new and increased pressure on an organisation's capability to get more out of the available resource they have, and this often translates into pressure on the individual employees. It is where it is important to correlate performance result with competencies and therefore imperative to define a set of core competencies which corresponds the organisation's key market differentiator.

Competency is that underlying skill, personal characteristics, or motive demonstrated by various observable behaviours that contribute to outstanding performance in a job. Competencies exist at different levels of personality and includes knowledge, skills, behaviour, personal characteristics like traits and motive

The present concept of globalization necessitates innovative approaches in managing the working force. The dramatic changes in the demography and social systems thereof, has given leeway for various HR practices enhancing the employee productivity and growth. For building a strong working relationship within the organization, competency of the people has to be continuously monitored and enhanced in congruence with the business plan.

The recent economic downturn has created a situation for companies to scale down various overhead costs to meet their growth requirements. Competency modelling identifies the precise set of competencies and proficiency levels needed for every role in the organisation. Companies have long realised the importance of competency mapping as an important HR function. This is especially relevant in this recessionary environment where human capital is one of the most important assets of an organisation and needs to be nurtured. Dynamic people build dynamic organizations and effective employees contribute to the effectiveness of the organization. Competence of the employees plays a key role to enhance overall efficiency of the organization

Companies are constantly shifting their approach of having multi-competent employees with knowledge of only one competency and are much more interested in knowing the present competency level of their employees so that training can be given to improve their performance and this is exactly where Competency Mapping comes in to focus.

Hence this article takes a closer look into one of the most commonly used HR practice - Competency based HR practice and how organisations are identifying and nurturing competencies in the organization enables better performance management as well as reward and recognition systems leading to career and succession planning programs.

### **Recent Trends**

Human Resources of any organisation aims at constantly assessing competency requirements of different individuals to perform the jobs assigned to them effectively and provide opportunities to develop these competencies to prepare them for future roles in the organization. Developing such competencies help to improve the performance of the employees in general and provide information to the company about the skills they possess which will ensure development of promotion strategies within the company.

Core competence is said to be that collective learning in the organization, especially the capacity to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate streams of technologies and also a means to committed

working across organizational boundaries. Organizing around core competencies requires a radical change in corporate organization. In such a process the first step requires identifying core competencies, which meet these three requirements: they provide potential access to a wide variety of markets, make a contribution to the customer benefits of the product, and are difficult for competitors to imitate and then redesign the architecture of the company and provide an impetus for learning from alliances and a focus for internal development.

Basically competency mapping helps a business to become more efficient, effective and competitive. It begins with a set of high-level core competency standards such as innovation, creativity, technical expertise, quality and a customer-oriented focus, which reflect strategic business goals. Through this process of competency mapping these goals become employee performance benchmarks. Managers then make use of these benchmarks to identify training needs that ultimately increase the productivity and performance of employees and the efficiency, effectiveness in achieving the goals of the organisation as a whole.

In today's world of cut throat competition, companies are putting tremendous effort to hire competent employees and to develop relevant competencies in their existing employees and these happen to be one of the few ways in which companies can gain competitive edge over each other. In the current situation where economy is slow moving and where so many companies are fighting for limited resources and talent, it is very important for organizations to incessantly reassess their competencies, update it and have the courage to make the necessary changes and surely it is equally imperative for a firm to define a set of core competencies which corresponds with its key market differentiators. This is where competency mapping plays a key role.

For that matter it is successfully employed in:

- **Recruitment and Selection**

It is used to construct a template for use in recruitment and selection. Information on the level of a competency required for effective performance would be used to determine the competence levels that new hires should possess. This results in hiring of an employee who is organizational as well as role fit and in this way organisations can reduce the cost of training of the new hired employees. Companies are using cutting edge technologies not only to select best applicants but also for them to manage internal roles.

- **Training and Development Requirements**

This latest HR tool helps in identifying the gap between competencies required for the position and those possessed by the employee and such gap is bridged by providing training to the incumbent for those particular competencies only.

- **Career and succession planning**

It definitely involves assessing employees' capability to take on new challenge and also to ensure if an employee is suitable for occupying position at the top management; his current competency level ought to be matched against those that required at higher level position. In order to be visible competencies need to be demonstrated and where it is usually demonstrated will within the scope of a project.

- **Performance Management System**

It is important to correlate performance result with competencies. Performance management system should be competency based and not just result based. Competency based performance management would focus on "HOW" of performance and not on "WHAT" of performance that is to say, not on results but how the results are achieved. Such an effective evaluation system should provide link to the development of an individual and not just to rewards.

## **Conclusion**

Competency mapping can thus ultimately serve the individual who decides to seek employment in an environment where he or she perhaps can learn new things and be more intellectually challenged. Basically, it is not meant for confirmed employees of an organization and it can also be done for contract workers or for those seeking employment to emphasize the specific skills which would make them valuable to a potential employer.

When companies basically set targets for their employees, the results speak as to whether the employee has achieved or not. But most of the successful and most admired companies employ the use of performance management systems in an on-going endeavour to link employees' performance to that of an organisations ultimate vision and mission. Such approach is made possible only through competencies.

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