 Competency Resources

- Buckingham and Coffman, *First, Break All the Rules*
- Burley-Allen, *Managing Assertively*
- Dubois & Rothwell, *Competency-Based Human Resource Management*
- Green, *Building Robust Competencies*
- Kessler, *Competency-Based Performance Reviews*
- Lucia & Lepsinger, *The Art and Science of Competency Models*
- Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance*

- www.workforce.com/articles → 31 Core Competencies Explained

MY ACTION STEPS

#1: ______________________________________________________________

#2: ______________________________________________________________

– Abigail Adams:

We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them.

About your Trainer

TJ Titcomb has been helping organizations manage change, develop leaders and prevent problems for nearly forty years. Certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources, she also holds a Master’s Degree in Counseling Psychology and a PhD in Organizational Development. Dr. Titcomb is an OD consultant with Cargas Systems.
I know it when I see it ...

Each table has a word inside the bright envelope. Come to agreement on the definition of the work-related characteristic:

= ______________________

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

We just want you to be more of a team player ...

Insider Tips on Development

Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.

– Goethe
Competencies and Growth

When you have defined competencies, provided performance coaching and continually assessed level of competence, it becomes easier to recognize when there are gaps between how an employee is doing and the desired levels of performance. Developing competencies is not just sending somebody off to training. A single off-site workshop rarely produces behavior change on the job.

Effective organizations offer a broad range of Learning and Developmental Activities (LDAs). Some options include:

- Coaching by a peer/mentor
- Coaching by the supervisor
- Observation
- Guided self-study
- Skill practice
- Special projects
- Workshops and formal courses

Several studies suggest that, for many employees, the most successful approach in producing behavior change is on-the-job training by a peer coach or mentor. This coach is often a seasoned and talented team member who also has the skills to teach others what s/he has learned.

Don’t overlook the importance of your front-line supervisors. These folks are pivotal to your success. As the saying goes: employees don’t leave companies; they leave supervisors. Your sups need training, support and coaching from their managers if they are to serve as coaches for your team members. If supervisors don’t get regular coaching and feedback from managers, they won’t know how to be a coach for their staff. A more dangerous outcome is they will get the message that coaching is not really that important – if it were, they would be coached by their supervisors.

The What and Why of Competencies

A competency is a cluster of related KSAOs . . .

- **Knowledge** – what you know
- **Skills** – what you can do
- **Abilities** – what you are capable of
- **Other characteristics**

Competencies determine how employees apply and use their KSAOs on the job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Job Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the regular tasks you do</td>
<td>how you do the tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Competencies are what set the successful employee apart from the rest of the gang. They also help you distinguish so-so performers from your superstars.

Because competencies are usually expanded with examples of specific behaviors, they provide a solid foundation for all the critical aspects of the people side of business: hiring, performance management, and development. The framework helps us define what we’re looking for in potential employees and how to evaluate candidates. Competencies can determine performance standards and expectations, as well as assessing how employees are meeting those standards. They also shape the coaching we offer to team members. We can more easily identify performance gaps and choose approaches to reduce the gaps.
Create a Competency

Competencies are usually defined with examples of behaviors – actions you can see, hear or count.

FLEXIBILITY

Adjusts approach and activities to meet changing needs and situations

- Adjusts approach and activities to meet changing needs and situations
- Considers different points of view and ways of doing things
- Recognizes when change is needed even if comfortable with the status quo
- Remains positive and productive during periods of rapid or turbulent change
- Takes on new or additional responsibilities as needed
- Adjusts own style or approach when it is not working in a specific situation
- Uses personal resilience skills to manage change effectively

Expand your original definition with specific behaviors →

Team members who demonstrate this competency . . .

... ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________ ____________________________________________________

COMPETENCY TIPS

“Understands” is not a behavior because you can’t count it; replace with Uses or Applies. Also, avoid using the term, “is able to.” We’re not focusing on what people are capable of but rather what they actually do.

Insider Tips on Performance

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.
– Theodore Roosevelt
Start with the Big Stuff

So, you can write a competency – now what? Start with the most important factor in achieving your vision and mission: the Core Values. A built-in challenge with values is that they are on the inside and invisible. Translate your guiding principles into competencies and related behaviors that you can hire for, hold people accountable for, and help them develop.

The translation process begins with your current employees. Think of your superstar team members who bring your values to life. Watch to see what they actually say and do. Then start to talk with people. Ask your best employees what they think. Talk with the key customers in your setting. What do they expect to see from someone who is living the values? Push for specific examples of desired behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Value:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. ____________________</td>
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<td>5. ____________________</td>
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<td>6. ____________________</td>
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Values carry the message of shared purpose, standards and conceptions of what is worth living for and what is worth striving for.

— Anita Roddick

Competencies and Performance

Rarely do performance issues center on an employee’s inability to do job tasks. The problems usually come from how the person performs. Despite this reality, many performance management systems measure employees on what, when and how much – with little attention to the how and the why.

Competencies give your supervisors rich topics of discussions in regular coaching conversations with team members. In organizations where performance coaching is truly supported and promoted, supervisors are given both the tools and the time to help their staff be successful. Expectations are clarified with ongoing, two-way dialogue. Team members are given timely and specific feedback on what and how they are doing throughout the year. Every person is given recognition, appreciation and support for their accomplishments, efforts and progress. Performance is monitored and documented so patterns can be quickly recognized and dealt with.

And underlying everything is a competency-based performance review process that doesn’t just focus on the what, but also assesses the how. The performance review also gives formal feedback to the team member on how s/he is living the Core Values everyday on the job.

TEAM COMPETENCY: QUALITY

1 2 3 4 Strives to do one’s best and serve as an example to others
1 2 3 4 Follows procedures and uses best practices to produce high quality work
1 2 3 4 Monitors own work for accuracy and adherence to quality standards
1 2 3 4 Suggests improvements and better ways to do the work
1 2 3 4 Anticipates problems and takes action to prevent or overcome them

4 = consistently exceeds expectations – goes above and beyond
3 = consistently meets expectations – fully competent
2 = inconsistent performance – needs to make improvement
1 = unacceptable performance – immediate change required
Competencies and Hiring

Once you have your Core Value competencies, define the competencies needed to be successful in each job. Position competencies apply to a specific job; team competencies are those needed by every position within a work group. After you have spelled out the desired competencies, you can use them to make sure you’re hiring the right people.

Write interview questions designed to discover how an applicant has actually used what they say they know. The key is to define the behaviors you need for the position and then develop a question that helps determine whether or not the person has behaved that way in the past. Remember the underlying principle of behavioral interviewing: Past behavior is the only reliable predictor of future behavior.

Tell me about a time when …

#1: ______________________ ______________________
#2: ______________________ ______________________

The final preparatory step is to decide what you’re looking for in the response. The ideal answer would …

#1: ______________________ ______________________
#2: ______________________ ______________________

Insider Tips on Hiring

We know what a person thinks not when he tells us what he thinks, but by his actions.

– Isaac Bashevis Singer